

ESSAYS

Wood (Y) 16
ON

4.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT,

AND

Subjection and Obedience

TO

THE HIGHER POWERS.

“GOVERNMENT and LAW;

“The solid basis, and the beauteous frame,

“The vitals and the grace of civil life!”

YOUNG.



Wigan:

PRINTED BY W. LYON.

—
1796.



T
this
requ
of f
hap
veri
plea
it m
per
goo
ma
dut

I
the
gov
be
tru
ter
the
wa
Sac
ma
go
dec

wi
he

PREFACE.

THE design of Christianity is to make men happy in this world, as well as in that which is to come; for it requires whatever is necessary to the peace and good order of society; and is so suited in all its commands to the happiness and welfare of mankind, that were these universally obeyed, men would be easy, kind, useful, and pleasing to one another. There are not many things that it more insists on, and frequently inculcates, than a due performance of relative duties, as the way to make men good Christians; particularly it obliges men to be good magistrates and subjects, or enjoins a strict care of the duties incumbent on them in those relations.

It may be asserted by some persons, that Ministers of the Gospel have nothing to do with the affairs of civil government; and indeed if the affairs of civil government be viewed in a light merely political, there may be much truth in such an assertion. I confess that a Gospel Minister's ultimate object, is to promote the glory of God in the salvation of immortal souls; and the right and only way to accomplish this is laid down before him in the Sacred Scriptures. But is not, *subjection* and *obedience* to magistrates, supreme and subordinate, an affair of the gospel? And is it not the duty of Gospel Ministers to declare the whole counsel of God to their hearers?

What the apostle Paul says to Titus upon this subject, will set the matter in a clear light;—*Put them in mind*, says he, *to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey*
A *magistrates.*

magistrates. Here we have, first the duty itself, *subjection* and *obedience*: secondly the objects of it, *principalities*, *powers*, and *magistrates*. The word *subjection*, may signify the acknowledgment of obedience to be due to principalities, powers, and magistrates; and obedience, the act itself of obeying. By principalities, powers, and magistrates, are meant, magistrates, supreme and subordinate; by supreme, those in whom the sovereign authority is lodged; and, by subordinate, inferior magistrates who are deputed by them to exercise authority under them. These are the persons, to whom Titus is ordered, by the apostle Paul, to put the Christians in Crete, (a large island in the Mediterranean, now called Candia) in mind of subjection and obedience, which was what they were taught by some to forget.

The orders here given to Titus, were, in his person, intended for every Christian Pastor: hence there is no ground in the world for any one to object against Ministers when they preach subjection and obedience to magistrates, that they exceed the bounds of their office, and meddle with matters which do not belong to them. It belongs to such objectors to shew, that the case of Titus, as to the matter in hand, was really different from that of the Ministers of the Gospel in succeeding ages of the Christian Church, and at this day, which I believe they cannot; and failing herein, we must be allowed to say, that they charge the apostle Paul with giving Titus wrong advice; and if he did in this, why not in other things? And at this rate the authority of most of the New Testament is overthrown,—a circumstance highly pleasing to Thomas Paine and his Deistical followers: but we know that the apostle Paul was under the guidance of an infallible Spirit in all these writings of his, which are part of the canon of the Holy Scripture.

To

To say that Ministers of the Gospel meddle with things which belong not to them, when they recommend and press obedience to lawful authority, argues a great want of judgment in them that say so; for certainly to instruct men in Christ's religion, to publish to them the doctrines which Christ and his Apostles have taught, and enforce upon them the practice of those duties which the Christian religion enjoins and requires,—this is no state-matter, but an affair of the Gospel, which to be sure belongs to Ministers of the Gospel.

A Gospel Minister cannot go beyond his commission while he keeps within the compass of his Bible; while he only explains the doctrines and duties therein taught, and recommends the belief of the one, and the practice of the other. But, (with regard to obedience to lawful authority,) though it belongs to Ministers of the Gospel to remind their hearers to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates, and to charge every soul under their care to be subject to the higher powers; such discourses should be handled with the greatest caution, circumstances render them necessary, and the greatest care observed not to make them vehicles of abuse;—the great objects proposed should be, to convey instruction, and to gain the heart.

The following Essays were written, and are now published, with a design to set forth, in a scriptural light, the duty of subjects to the higher powers; how far that design is answered, belongs not to me to determine. I am far from wishing Christians to study politics: to endeavour *to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God*;—would be infinitely more beneficial

neficial in time and in eternity. Yet, as members of civil society, and parts of bodies corporate, it is necessary they should both know and practice those duties, which the laws of Christ, and the Constitution of their country, require of them.

Those parts of the Essays marked with "commas" were taken from other writers. In the beginning of the first Essay, from the Encyclopædia Britannica, article LAW; and page 19, from the same, article SERVANT. Page 18, and part of page 20, and page 21, from the late Rev. John Wesley's Thoughts upon Liberty. Page 30, and page 31, from Bishop Sherlock's Sermon upon Rom. xiii. 1. And some little matters, not particularly marked, from Cave's Primitive Christianity.

Such as the Essays are, or whatever may be the opinion of men concerning them, I lay them before the Public with a good design, hoping they may be serviceable to the peace and good order of society. As Christians, this is the will of God concerning us, *that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty, for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*

THOMAS WOOD.

Wigan, May 9th, 1796.



ESSAY I.

ON THE GENERAL CHARACTER, OR DESCRIPTION OF
A GOOD CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

“WHEN the Supreme Being formed the universe, and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be. When he put that matter into motion, he established certain laws of motion, to which all moveable bodies must conform. And, to descend from the greatest operations to the smallest, when a workman forms a clock, or other piece of mechanism, he establishes, at his own pleasure, certain arbitrary laws for its direction; as, that the hand shall describe a given space in a given time; to which law as long as the work conforms, so long it continues in perfection, and answers the end of its formation.

“If we further advance, from mere inactive matter to vegetable and animal life, we shall find them still governed by laws; more numerous indeed, but equally fixed and invariable. The whole progress of plants, from the seed to the root, and from thence to the seed again; the method of animal nutrition, digestion, secretion, and all other branches of vital economy;—are not left to chance, or the will of the creature itself, but are performed in a wondrous involuntary manner, and guided by unerring rules laid down by the great Creator.

“Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, for he is entirely a dependant being. A being independant of any other, has no rule to pursue but such as he prescribes to himself: but a state of dependance will inevitably oblige the infe-

rior to take the will of him on whom he depends as the rule of his conduct; not indeed in every particular, but in all those points wherein his dependance consists. This principle, therefore, has more or less extent and effect, in proportion as the superiority of the one, and the dependance of the other, is greater or less, absolute or limited. And consequently, as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for every thing, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will.

"This will of his Maker is called the *law of nature*. For when God created man, and endued him with free-will to conduct himself in all parts of life, he laid down certain immutable laws of human nature, whereby that free-will is in some degree regulated and restrained; and gave him also a faculty of reason to discover the purport of those laws. And if our reason were always, as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease or intemperance, the task would be pleasant and easy. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience; that his reason is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error."

When man, by transgression, had fallen from his original rectitude, and was guilty, miserable and helpless, divine wisdom and compassion were gloriously displayed, in devising a plan to recover him; which has, at sundry times, and in divers manners, been made known to man by an immediate and direct revelation, and is to be found in the Holy Scriptures; which Scriptures, as they contain the will of God to fallen and redeemed man, we call the *revealed or divine law*. "And if man were to live in a state of nature, unconnected with other individuals, there would be no occasion for any other laws than the law of nature, and the revealed law of God. But man was formed for society; and, as is demonstrated by the writers on this subject, is neither capable of living alone, nor has the courage to do it.

"However, as it is impossible for the whole race of mankind to be united in one great society, they must necessarily divide into many; and form separate states, commonwealths, and nations, entirely independent of each other, and yet liable to a mutual intercourse. Hence arises a law to regulate this mutual intercourse, called the

law

law of nations: which, as none of these states will acknowledge a superiority in the other, cannot be dictated by either; but depends entirely upon the rules of natural law, or upon mutual compacts, treaties, leagues, and agreements, between these several communities: in the construction also of which compacts we have no other rule to resort to but the law of nature; that being the only law to which both communities are equally subject.

“The *municipal* or *civil law*, succeeds the law of nature, the revealed law, and the law of nations. This law is, the rule by which particular districts, communities, or nations, are governed, and is properly defined to be, “a rule of civil conduct prescribed by the supreme power in a state, commanding what is right, and prohibiting what is wrong.”

“The only true and natural foundations of society are the wants and fears of individuals; and it is the sense of their weakness and imperfection that keeps mankind together, that demonstrates the necessity of this union, and is the cement of society. And in society the whole should protect all its parts, and every part should pay obedience to the will of the whole; or, in other words, the community should guard the rights of each individual member, and (in return for this protection) each individual should submit to the laws of the community; without which subjection of all, it would be impossible that protection could be certainly extended to any. For when society is once formed, government results of course; as necessary to preserve and keep that society in order.”

Whatever may have been the rise and origin of government, the end of it is unquestionably the welfare of the community. The magistrate is the minister of God to thee for good, for the good of men, for preventing the miseries of anarchy, disorder and confusion. Governors are raised up and invested with power, for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well.

Therefore, that particular state, or form of government, that would most effectually promote the welfare of the community, must be the best. The following sketch of a good civil government will, I hope, recommend itself to the attention and approbation of the wise and impartial reader; and, also, assist and determine the wavering in their conjectures about government;—as being free

from the errors, inconsistencies, and inconveniencies of others, and uniting in it all the excellencies to be found in others, and consequently preferable to any other. I shall consider it as having the following qualifications:

The first thing requisite to a well constituted form of government, is a due temperament and subordination of power; that the supreme power be wisely lodged and proportioned, not totally in one hand, but in several, so as that one branch of the constitution may be a check upon another; whence will result a just ballance or poize upon the whole. And under the supreme power, there must be likewise a proper subordination or gradation of authority, descending by convenient steps, from the highest to the lowest order in the community: this the very notion of a supreme power necessarily infers. Limited and well regulated monarchy, is certainly preferable to any other form of government: it is like a powerful and prolific river, that, as it rolls along, overflows its banks, and fertilizes the adjacent grounds.

“ Unless some superior be constituted, whose commands and decisions all the members are bound to obey, they would still remain as in a state of nature, without any judge upon earth to define their several rights, and redress their several wrongs. But as all the members of society are naturally equal, it may be asked, In whose hands are the reins of government to be entrusted? To this the general answer is easy. In general, all mankind will agree, that government should be reposed in such persons, in whom those qualities are most likely to be found, the perfection of which is among the attributes of him who is emphatically stiled the Supreme Being; the three grand requisites, namely, of wisdom, of goodness, and of power: wisdom, to discern the real interest of the community; goodness, to endeavour always to pursue that real interest; and strength or power, to carry this knowledge and intention into action. These are the natural foundations of sovereignty, and these are the requisites that ought to be found in every well constituted frame of government.

“ The political writers of antiquity will not allow more than three regular forms of government: the first, when the sovereign power is lodged in an aggregate assembly consisting of all the members of a community, which is
called

called a *democracy*; the second, when it is lodged in a council composed of select members, and then it is stiled an *aristocracy*; the last, when it is entrusted in the hands of a single person, and then it takes the name of a *monarchy*. All other species of government, they say, are either corruptions of, or reducible to, these three."

'Tis the peculiar felicity of his Majesty's subjects, that the British Constitution is composed of the King, Lords, and Commons; for under this happy mixture we enjoy all the advantages of all the above-regular forms of government, without being subject to the inconveniences of any of them. The executive power of the laws is lodged solely in the King, which gives our constitution all the advantages of strength and dispatch that are to be found in the most absolute monarchy. The Lords spiritual and temporal, is an aristocratical assembly of persons, selected for their piety, their birth, their wisdom, their valour, or their property. And the members of the House of Commons, are freely chosen by the people from among themselves, which makes a kind of democracy. And "as this aggregate body, actuated by different springs, and attentive to different interests, composes the British Parliament, and has the supreme disposal of every thing, there can no inconvenience be attempted by either of the three branches, but will be withstood by one of the other two; each branch being armed with a negative power sufficient to repel any innovation which it shall think inexpedient or dangerous."

2. Another thing requisite to a good government, is good and wholesome laws; for these are the public voice by which magistrates, supreme and subordinate, speak to the subject part of the nation. The necessity of human laws will appear, if we consider, that "there are a great number of indifferent points, in which the divine law and the natural leave a man at his own liberty; but which are found necessary, for the benefit of society, to be restrained within certain limits. And herein it is that human laws have their greatest force and efficacy: for, with regard to such points as are not indifferent, human laws are only declaratory of, and act in subordination to, the former. But with regard to matters that are in themselves indifferent, and are not commanded or forbidden by those superior laws; such, for instance, as exporting

of wool into foreign countries; here the inferior legislature has scope and opportunity to interpose, and to make that action unlawful which before was not so."

The laws of the constitution, I say, must be good and wholesome laws; and those laws must be the rule of government, or the fixed standard of behaviour, both to the prince and the people. This is a true distinction between righteous governors and tyrants, between absolute power and legal government. It sets bounds to the prerogatives of those in power, and the rights and privileges of the people. It gives the governors a right to the subjection and obedience of the governed, and the governed a right to the favour and protection of the governors; and seems to be the grand characteristic of a good government, and what distinguishes it from a despotic or tyrannical one, where there is no law, but the arbitrary will of the sovereign.

And to good and wholesome laws there must be penalties annexed to them, proportioned to the magnitude of offences; for the main strength and force of a law consists in the penalty annexed to it. Yet, when the laws are broken, if mercy, in whole or in part, can be administered, to the advantage of the transgressors, and of society in general, it should never be omitted: for compassion and mercy shine with infinite lustre in the divine government; and therefore should be exercised by men towards each other. And, to do the subject justice, laws should not be made *ex post facto*, after an action is committed; but made to commence *in futuro*, and be notified before their commencement.

And, as the laws must be good laws, so it is most agreeable to the dignity of human nature, and most for the honour of free-born subjects, to be governed by no laws but those which they, by their representatives, have freely consented to; for, in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. Yet, the greatest powers on earth neither have, nor can have any authority to contradict or violate the declared will of God, the great and righteous governor of the world; to forbid what he has commanded, or command what he has forbidden; for his laws are binding over all the earth, in all countries, and at all times; and no human laws are valid if contrary to them.

In

In Great Britain the law makes the King, and he is bound to make that the measure of his government. The great caution observed in our government, in making laws, is worthy of a remark, "Bills are usually twice read in each House, committed, engrossed, and then read a third time; and when they have obtained the concurrence of both Houses, and received the royal assent, they become acts of parliament." And from the time a law is enacted, neither House of Parliament has any thing to do with it. The executive power being lodged solely in the King; and every member of both Houses being as much subject to it as any other person in the kingdom; it will, with the same impartiality, be executed upon them, as upon any other person; yea, the King himself is not above the law, though it belongs to him to put it into execution.

The laws of our country are our defence and security from arbitrary power and oppression; and when these are thrown down, by a dispensing power, the King un-kings himself, and our obligations of obedience to him cease: so the nation thought at the Revolution. "At the Revolution the convention of estates, or representative body of the nation, declared, that the misconduct of King James II. amounted to an abdication of the government, and that the throne was thereby *vacant*. In consequence of this vacancy, and from a regard to the ancient line, the convention appointed the next Protestant heirs of the blood royal of King Charles I. to fill the vacant throne, in the old order of succession; with a temporary exception or preference to the person of King William III. on the impending failure of the Protestant line of King Charles I. (whereby the throne might again have become vacant) the King and Parliament extended the settlement of the crown to the Protestant line of King James I. viz. to the Princess Sophia of Hanover, and the heirs of her body, being Protestants: and she is now the common stock, from whom the heirs of the crown must descend."

3. Another thing requisite to a good government, is a due execution of good laws. The laws cannot execute themselves. The law is but a dead letter, till actuated by the hand of proper authority: without this, the best law is but an empty form, and the lawgiver but the shadow

dow of authority. Now the execution of the laws depends not so much upon the supreme, as the subordinate powers, to whom it is entrusted, in the most of its branches: a thing which those would do well to consider, into whose hands such an important charge is more immediately committed; so important it is, that all the benefits of society depend upon it. For let the personal qualifications and excellencies of the supreme governor be never so great and many; his inclinations and designs be never so honourable and just; and the laws of the constitution be never so equitable and well calculated to produce the most beneficial effects; yet if subordinate magistrates be ignorant or timorous, corrupted and perverted; this will unavoidably spoil and blemish the beauty and honour of the government; and the supreme governor be baffled and disappointed in all, through the base treachery and unfaithfulness of those who are entrusted by him with the execution of the laws. The execution of the laws should be entrusted in the hands of persons of known wisdom and courage, honesty and integrity; for a steady execution of the law is the life of it.

It is the duty of magistrates duly to administer justice between man and man, and therein to proceed and give sentence according to the rules of justice. This God calls for, "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream;" let the administration of it be free as the natural course of waters is; let it be pure as running waters, not mudded with any thing whatsoever that may pervert justice; let it run like a mighty stream, without laying obstructions in the way of it; let all have benefit by it as by a common stream. That justice be duly administered, it is necessary that it be done impartially, without respect of persons. Magistrates are very frequently cautioned against respect of persons in judgment; "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but you shall hear the small as well as the great." To have respect of persons in judgment is not good; it is thinking or doing somewhat in favour, or to the prejudice of another, upon such motives as have no direct tendency to the matter in hand; at least are insufficient to bear magistrates out in the stress they lay upon them; such as quality, reputation, learning, riches, or any other external consideration: when these, or such like circumstances

stances as these, bias the judgment, and incline magistrates to the persons who have them, or when the want of these things possesses their minds with aversion or distaste to those who have them not; then there is a respect of persons, and a plain departure from their duty. Laws are made without respect of persons, and judgment should be given according to them, without respect of persons; and when magistrates do so, they at once render people happy, themselves honourable, and a government excellent.

4. Another very essential requisite to a good government, is protection both of persons and property, from domestic and foreign enemies. For, were our persons unprotected, and our property insecure, we should be destitute of the advantages of society, and without sufficient motives to stimulate us to honest industry; fear would torment us, poverty starve us, yea, misery, in all its forms, rush in upon us. And, as trade and commerce do of necessity intermingle the interests of society and nations with each other, the magistrate's care is not confined wholly to the limits of his own territories and dominions. The sword is put into his hand to repel injuries from abroad, as well as to correct disorders at home; and he must not bear it in vain. But when he engages in war, the purest motives should always influence and direct his views. For, were he to delight in war, and involve his people and country in misery and desolation, to exalt, or aggrandise, what he esteems his glory; or sport with the lives and fortunes of his subjects, and wantonly lavish away their blood and treasure, purely to indulge his ambitious or revengeful aims; I say, were this the case, he would be a tyrant, a monster in human shape. The most justifiable war is but a necessary evil, and should be entered into for the sake of, and in order to peace;—this is the motive that should always direct and influence it; peace being the very soul of society.

How much to be wished for is that glorious period, when true religion shall have enlightened and reformed the earth, so that “the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Then the implements of war shall be converted into instruments of agriculture,
and

and in improving nature, and the earth bring forth her increase to bless her peaceable inhabitants. There shall be no war; benevolence shall inspire the nations, and friendship and good-will shall subsist between them; war shall not be necessary, either to restrain the violence, or punish the wickedness of nations; and consequently, it shall grow out of use, and the nations shall learn, or be disciplined or trained up for war, no more. May the King, the Lawgiver, and Judge of the nations, hasten this period! "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord. Make bare thy holy arm, O Lord, in the eyes of all nations; and let all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

5 Another thing requisite to a good government, is encouragement to study, and make improvements in, the useful arts and sciences. Ignorance renders a man a stranger to himself and to the world he is in, causes him to rest in mental indolence, shuts him out from social intercourse with the wise, and is a great barrier in his way to intellectual happiness. And ignorance does not only prevent rational pleasure, in contemplation and converse; but is also very hurtful to society. Ignorant parents, in general, bring up their children in ignorance: and, if those children enter into the marriage state, and are fruitful in a rising progeny; how are ignorance and barbarity propagated! As they do not see the necessity and excellency of useful knowledge, they are not excited to seek after it themselves, nor do they recommend it to the attention and pursuit of others. And as they live in darkness, so they delight in the works of darkness. Being destitute of mental acquirements, they follow their vain imaginations, and rejoice in those base pleasures, which are agreeable to fallen nature in its lapsed estate. When time and money tolerate them, they frequently indulge themselves to excess, in sensuality and brutishness. As they are not charmed with the amiableness of virtue, they live in the odious commission of vice. Being strangers to delicacy of sentiment, and to the feelings of humanity in its improved state, they break over the bounds
of

of modesty and respect, attack their superiors with insolence and contempt, practise cruelty in one shape or another, expose themselves to the lash of the law, and, when inflamed with either real or imaginary grievances, break the bands of discipline asunder, and, with all the fury of madness, rush into society, breathing destruction and executing vengeance.

Now, as one department of good government is to punish transgressors; why should it not be employed also in cultivating and improving the human mind; and thereby preventing, as much as possible, its irregularities and hurtful extravagancies? Surely this is not unworthy the legislature! Nay; is it not one of the noblest works of man! Does the Supreme Being make use of means to enlighten, regenerate, and save man; and, is it in consequence of man's wilful disobedience, established impenitence, and persevering rebellion, that he finally punishes him in the world to come? Surely then, as this conduct is observed in the divine, there should be some resemblance of it in, civil government!

And, when encouragement is given to the useful arts, by offering rewards to merit, to stimulate persons to deep investigation, and to make new improvements and discoveries, how are excellent talents called out of obscurity into useful exercise, society benefited with the advantages of genius and researches; trade and manufactories increase and improve; and health, happiness, and fortune appear on every hand!

In our own country we have something of this. We have many seminaries of learning, many learned and useful men, and encouragement given to learning, science, and the useful arts. The scholar may rise to places of eminence; the scientific to public esteem and rewards; and the mechanical genius to reputation and wealth. Knowledge is increasing, benevolence expanding, natural rusticity wearing off, and reason gaining her empire over prejudice, appetite, and passion. Our manufactories and trade are excellent, and enrich individuals and the nation with blessings. And agriculture has lately met with great encouragement, and is now in a very improving state.

Sunday Schools are an excellent institution for improving the lower classes of society; and will, undoubtedly, be

be very useful both to the present and succeeding generations. The general utility of them is so well known, by persons who have maturely considered the subject, that it would be an insult offered to their understandings to inform them. However, to inform the ignorant, (if there be such) rouse the attention of the indolent, kindle sentiments of compassion where they are not, stimulate the opulent to do good, encourage benefactors to persevere, direct useful abilities into a new and profitable exercise, and press managers and instructors to unwearied diligence, I shall just observe, that when they are under proper regulations, and conducted by sensible, steady and affectionate, virtuous and pious persons, they prevent a large train of enormous and destructive evils, and cultivate the mind for domestic, civil, and religious life.

6. And another ingredient, and which deserves our highest regard, is the care of religion; for this is what sanctifies and secures all the other benefits to us, and is so necessary, not only for its own sake, being a matter of infinite and everlasting concern, but even for the sake of all the rest. "The throne, says Solomon, is established in righteousness;" *i. e.* not only by the administration of civil justice, but by the observance of every moral virtue. If the magistrate have a right to punish immoralities of all kinds, because they are in their nature destructive of civil society; has he not a right equally to protect and encourage religion, piety and virtue, which are not only beneficial, nay essential to it; and to discourage their contraries?

Princes are bound to profess and encourage what they believe and take to be the true religion, and to use proper and rational methods to promote and support it. But they have no power to alter the laws and ordinances of the gospel; for they are the laws and ordinances of Christ, the KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. Neither have they any right to persecute those of their subjects who differ from them in religion. It would be cruel, unjust, and tyrannical, to persecute them with external force and violence, depriving them of their natural and civil rights, to confiscation of goods, imprisonment and death. These things have no natural tendency to inform the judgment and convince the conscience; they may make men hypocrites in religion, but they can never make them acceptable worshippers of the true God.

Such

Such a procedure would indeed be a great abuse of power. No violence should be offered to the natural freedom of men's consciences, and that right of private judgment, which God hath endued every man with, and which he may claim as his birth-right.

Religion and conscience are sacred things, and should always be preserved sacred and inviolable. It is God's prerogative to rule and govern the conscience; and a good prince will not dare to step into his throne, or to usurp any of the rights of his crown and dignity. And unless religion flow from the conviction of the mind, and choice of the will and affections, it cannot be acceptable to God, because it is not a reasonable service: every man should try, judge, and chuse for himself; for in matters of religion every one ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind.

In our own nation the true religion is established by law, and our King is obliged to maintain and support it, by all proper and rational methods; yet not to make use of persecution or external force with those in the nation that may be otherwise minded. In religious matters, every one may follow his own judgment and conscience, and be protected by the laws of our country in so doing; which is a valuable privilege, and has a happy tendency to promote the interests of religion among us.

Thus now have I gone through what I proposed: and from what has been said, must it not be acknowledged that the above plan, or outlines, of civil government, is far preferable to any of the regular forms of government mentioned by the political writers of antiquity, namely, that of monarchy, democracy, and aristocracy? And also that the form of government it is our happiness to live under, comes the nearest of any in the world to that I have been describing? The British constitution is admirably calculated to promote that which is the end of government, viz. the happiness of the community. Our constitution is composed of the excellencies of all others; wisdom and strength are united in it, and liberty, security, expedition, and happiness, issue from it. While other nations have groaned under the cruel yoke of tyranny, oppression, and arbitrary power, we have enjoyed the privileges of a free people, under the protection and

C

advantages

advantages of laws of our own making; for, what is done by our representatives, is done by the nation.

But some of our nation say, that we are deprived of our civil liberty, or, at least, that it is greatly shackled. "What is *civil liberty*? A liberty to enjoy our lives and fortunes in our own way: to use our property, whatever is legally our own, according to our own choice. And can any person deny that we are destitute of this liberty? Who are? Certainly I am not. I pray do not face me down that I am. Do not argue me out of my senses. If the *Great Turk*, wills that a man should die, with or without cause, die he must. And instances of the kind continually occur: but no such instances occur in England. And if I study to be quiet and mind my own business, I am in no more danger of losing my liberty than my life. No, nor my property; I mean by any act of the King. If this is in any degree invaded, it is not by the King, or his parliament, or army;" but by the friends of lawless and licentious liberty. "I enjoy full civil liberty. I am free to live in every respect, according to my own choice. My life, my person, my property, are safe. I am not murdered, maimed, tortured at any man's pleasure: I am not thrown into prison. I am not manacled: see, I have not one fetter, either on my hands or feet. And are not you as free as I am? Are not you at liberty to enjoy the fruit of your labours? Who hinders you from doing it?" Do magistrates, supreme, or subordinate? "Do any of his Majesty's officers or soldiers? No, nor any man living. Perhaps some would hinder you, if you acted contrary to law: but this is not liberty; it is licentiousness. Deny the fact who can: am not I free to use my substance according to my own discretion? And do not you enjoy the selfsame freedom? You cannot, you dare not, deny it. At this hour I am at full liberty, to use my property as I please. And so are you: you do, in fact, use your house, your goods, your land, as is right in your own eyes. Does any one take them from you? No; nor does any one restrain you from the full enjoyment of them. What then is the matter? What is it you are making all this pother about? Why are you thus wringing your hands, and screaming, to the terror of your quiet neighbours, "Destruction! Slavery! Bondage! Help, contrymen! Our liberty is destroyed! We are ruined,

ruined, chained, fettered, undone!" Fettered! How? Where are the fetters, but in your own imagination? There are none, either on your hands, or mine. Neither you nor I can shew any man in his senses, that we have one chain upon us, even so big as a knitting-needle."

"The law of England abhors, and will not endure, the existence of slavery in this nation: so that when an attempt was made to introduce it, by Statute 1 Edw. VI. c. 3. which ordained, that all idle vagabonds should be made slaves, and fed upon bread, water, or small drink, and refuse-meat; should wear a ring of iron round their necks, arms, or legs; and should be compelled by beating, chaining, or otherwise, to perform the work assigned them, were it ever so vile; the spirit of the nation could not brook this condition, even in the most abandoned rogues; and therefore this statute was repealed in two years afterwards. And now it is laid down, that a slave or negro, the instant he lands in Britain, becomes a freeman; that is, the law will protect him in the enjoyment of his person and property. Yet, with regard to any right which the master may have lawfully acquired to the perpetual service of John or Thomas, this will remain exactly in the same state as before: for this is no more than the same state of subjection for life which every apprentice submits to for the space of seven years, or sometimes for a longer term. Hence, too, it follows, that the infamous and unchristian practice of withholding baptism from negro servants, lest they should thereby gain their liberty, is totally without foundation, as well as without excuse. The law of England acts upon general and extensive principles: it gives liberty, rightly understood, that is, protection, to a Jew, a Turk, or a Heathen, as well as to those who profess the true religion of Christ; and it will not dissolve a civil obligation between master and servant, on account of the alteration of faith in either of the parties; but the slave is entitled to the same protection in England before as after baptism; and, whatever service the Heathen negro owed of right to his American master, by general, not by local law, the same (whatever it be) is he bound to render when brought to England and made a Christian."

Our religious privileges are also very great: we have long been favoured with the light of the gospel of the

grace of God. It was very early brought into this remote corner of the earth; but by what hand is not agreed. However, we are told by historians of good credit, that Lucius was the first Christian King in the world, and Britain the first province that embraced Christianity by public authority; and that this was in the second century. And we have now the gospel of God our Saviour among us. We live in a land of Bibles and Ministers, in a Goshen of light, and by the waters of the sanctuary. We have churches and chapels for public worship, a great multitude of gospel ministers, and many of them burning and shining lights. And the word of God, which is now preached among us, is crowned with some desirable success; tens of thousands of persons are awakened to a right knowledge of their state, by nature and practice; have renounced the unfruitful works of darkness; by grace are saved through faith, in Jesus Christ; are useful members of civil and religious society; and are walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, to the "inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them."

One cause of the progress of religion in this country, is religious liberty. Though there is an established religion here, yet every person is at liberty to worship God *where*, and *when*, and *how*, he thinks most proper. But, do not some persons think, and say, that we are abridged of our religious liberty! What is *religious liberty*? "Religious liberty is, a liberty to chuse our own religion, to worship God according to our own conscience, according to the best light we have. And every man living, as man, has a right to this, as he is a rational creature. The Creator gave him this right when he endowed him with understanding. And every man must judge for himself, because every man must give an account of himself to God. Consequently this is an indefeasible right; it is inseparable from humanity. And God did never give authority, to any man, or number of men, to deprive any child of man thereof, under any colour or pretence whatever." Are we abridged, then, of our religious liberty? His Majesty's royal Grandfather was desired to take a step of this kind. But his answer was worthy of a King, yea the King of a free people, "I tell you, while I sit on the English throne, no man shall be per-

"secuted

“secuted for conscience sake.” “And it is certain, he made his promise good from the beginning of his reign to the end. But perhaps the case is altered now. But does his present Majesty tread in his steps? He persecutes no man for conscience sake. If he does, where is the man? I do not ask, whom has he committed to the flames, or caused to die by the common hangman? Or, whom has he caused to die many deaths, by hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness? But whom has he tortured or thrust into a dungeon, yea or imprisoned at all, or fined, for worshipping God according to his own conscience, in the presbyterian, or any other way? In the name of wonder, what religious liberty can you desire, or even conceive, which you have not already? Where is there a nation in *Europe*, in the habitable world, which enjoys such liberty of conscience as the *English*?”

And a very great regard hath been shewed to us, in the wonderful deliverances God hath graciously and seasonably wrought for us, by which our civil and religious liberties have been preserved to us. How many times have we been on the borders of ruin! How many times have our great and valuable privileges been in danger! In all which dangers, God's own arm brought us salvation, and blasted the designs formed against us by our enemies, both at home and abroad! Our manifold deliverances are so many proofs of the favour of God towards us and our Constitution; and should be gratefully acknowledged in a time of new distress, and are very proper to support our faith in God, that he will not forsake us, but continue to be our salvation and our God. “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say: if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

ESSAY II.

ON THE DUTY OF SUBJECTS TO THEIR SOVEREIGN.

A MODERN writer observes, "The most wise and benevolent Author of Nature, has formed all his creatures propitious to the social life. This is obvious in the whole scale of beings, from the minute insect, to the most enormous animal. The sportive shoals in the deep, the cheerful tribes in the air, the peaceful flocks in the field, and the voracious beasts of the forest, are all sensible to the delightful charms of society, and the happiness and pleasure it affords through every stage of life. The human species, whether in a savage or civilized state, impressed by instinct, and impelled by necessity, have formed themselves into political, commercial, or benevolent associations; each member contributing its part, has added to the happiness of the whole."

But one thing, highly conducive to the welfare of society, is good government; to which each member must conform. The necessity of this would appear, were we to consider the miseries that would attend the want of it. Man, while in a meer state of nature, left wholly to himself, without the culture of discipline, or restraint of laws, is a fierce and savage, a selfish and untractable creature; no creature perhaps having more vehement passions to desire mischief, none more cunning to contrive, none greater power to effect it. Observe only the insolent and outrageous behaviour of the riotous multitude, when inflamed with either real or imaginary grievances, and broken loose from government!—persons in such a state are a lively image of what would be the state of the world without it. To render society happy, government must be established, to define and defend the several rights, and redress the several wrongs, of society. "The absolute rights of man, considered as a free agent, endowed

dowed with discernment to know good from evil, and with power of chusing those measures which appear to him to be most desirable, are usually summed up in one general appellation, and denominated the *natural liberty of mankind*. This natural liberty consists properly in a power of acting as one thinks fit, without any restraint or controul, unless by the law of nature; being a right in us by birth, and one of the gifts of God to man at his creation, when he endued him with the faculty of free-will. But every man, when he enters into society, gives up a part of his natural liberty, as the price of so valuable a purchase; and, in consideration of receiving the advantages of mutual commerce, obliges himself to conform to those laws which the community has thought proper to establish. And this species of legal obedience and conformity is infinitely more desirable than that wild and savage liberty which is sacrificed to obtain it. For no man, that considers a moment, would wish to retain the absolute and uncontrouled power of doing whatever he pleases: the consequence of which is, that every other man would also have the same power; and then there would be no security to individuals in any of the enjoyments of life."

I say then, as every man, when he becomes the member of a civil community, alienates a part of his natural rights; for, in a state of nature, no man has a superior on earth, and each has a right to defend his life, liberty, and property, by all the means which nature has put in his power; so, in civil society, these rights are all transferred to the laws and the magistrate, except in cases of such extreme urgency as leave not time for legal interposition. "This single consideration is sufficient to show, that the right to civil liberty is alienable, though, in the vehemence of men's zeal for it, and in the language of some political remonstrances, it has often been pronounced an unalienable right."

And as the power of making laws constitutes the supreme authority, so wherever the supreme authority in any state resides, it is the right of that authority, to make laws; that is, *to prescribe the rule of civil action*. And this is necessary, in order that every man may know what to look upon as his own, what as another's; what absolute, and what relative duties are required at his hands; what

what is esteemed honest, dishonest, or indifferent; what degree every man retains of his natural liberty, and what he has given up as the price of the benefits of society; and after what manner each person is to moderate the use and exercise of those rights which the state assigns him, in order to promote and secure the public tranquillity.

In the British Constitution, the legislature of the kingdom is entrusted to three distinct powers, the King, Lords, and Commons, which are entirely independent of each other, and consequently the sovereignty is lodged as beneficially as possible for society. And as the constitutional government is so admirably tempered and compounded; nothing can endanger or hurt it, but destroying the equilibrium of power between one branch of the legislature and the rest. For if ever it should happen, that the independence of any of these should be lost, or that it should become subservient to the views of either of the other two, there would soon be an end of our constitution.

'Tis the peculiar felicity of our constitution, that our Kings are obliged to observe settled laws, and to confine their power within the limits by those laws prescribed; as well as subjects are obliged to yield legal obedience to their prince. We have the same right to our liberties and possessions, as the sovereign hath to his royal power and prerogatives, and hold them by the same legal tenure. And as the executive power of the laws is lodged solely in the King, it belongs to him to put them into execution: and, consequently, it is the bounden duty of all his subjects to obey him in the execution of those laws; which obedience, I shall, in this Essay, endeavour to explain, or show, in a few particulars, wherein it consists.

1. Our duty to the King includes, a recognition of his right to govern, and his just claim to our subjection and allegiance; an acknowledgment of all that power which is his right and due; and we must be directed to determine what is so, by the laws of the constitution. I think I may take the liberty to say, that no prince had ever a more indisputable title to a crown, than our present sovereign King George; for all imaginable methods of possessing a throne lawfully, must be reduced to these three, viz. the appointment of God,—conquest,—the consent of the people. As for the appointment of God, once we know

know God himself did interpose and make kings for his own people; thus Saul and David were made kings: but it would be difficult to prove that any monarch now upon earth, holds his crown, by any such grant from God, made to him in his own person, or conveyed to him by virtue of a divine entail from any predecessor, put thus at first into possession. As to possession acquired by conquest, though it has been the more common method of establishing empire among men, yet strictly speaking, it can be no better than the right of a robber. A possession seized by violence, and kept by dint of power, any further than the extorted consent of the people, may be thought to legitimate the exercise of that power, which at first was unjustly assumed. The free consent of the people, seems, therefore, in the ordinary state of human affairs, to give a prince the rightful possession of a throne: and this is the right that King George has to govern us. All the chief in the nation, and great multitudes of his meaner subjects, have sworn allegiance to him, and abjured every competitor with him for the crown; and thus have recognized his right to govern them. As none can reasonably expect protection from any governor, who will not give security to live peaceably and orderly, and like good subjects under his administration of it; more especially, where the prince swears to observe the laws of his country, and rule according to them; so, in the very giving this security, an acknowledgment is made of the prince's authority and just claim to our subjection. And, let me add here, it can be no less than downright perjury, for a man to give the security of an oath for his allegiance, and then reckon himself under no obligation by what he has solemnly sworn. If men may at this rate swear, and then abjure and renounce what they have sworn, all mutual trust and security among men is at an end; and such perjured persons, are guilty of great impiety towards God, and traitors to the common interests of mankind.

2. Another thing included in our duty to the King, is, respect for his person, and reverence for his authority. This is more particularly meant by that honouring him, which the apostle Peter requires—"Honour the king." A peculiar respect is due to the King, above all other persons in the nation. The king is one of the principal ministers

ministers of God for our good ; he is the deputy and vicegerent of God the King of the world : he must therefore be thought and spoken of with respect ; an awe of him should be imprest upon the mind, to conciliate a due regard to him, and to keep us within the bounds of our duty,—for, “where the word of a king is, there is power.”

And this civil respect and reverence, includes a candid and respectful censure of his actions and undertakings. We must neither hastily condemn his actions, nor groundlessly suspect his designs, nor represent his undertakings as foolish and ill managed, because they do not succeed well sometimes. Success, we should consider, is in the hand of God, who gives and denies it as he pleases: 'tis often seen, that “the battle is not to the strong.” We should put as good a construction on his actions as they will bear, and acquiesce in his administrations, when we are ignorant of the reasons of them ; and it may be many times unfit, that the people should know all the reasons of state, upon which the supreme magistrate acts. The scriptures forbid our condemning and censuring the actions of our superiors, and thereby our fermenting and cherishing suspicions and jealousies in others. “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” “Curse not the king, no not in thy thought.” Jude ranks it among the ill characters of a sort of men, that infested the church in his time, that they “spoke evil of dignities.”

And the apostle Peter, in his second general epistle, says, that as there were false prophets among the Israelites, so there shall be false teachers among the Christians. There have been in all ages, and are now, false teachers. Satan hath his emissaries to sow tares, wherever God hath faithful ministers to sow the good seed of the word of truth.

“Wherever God erects a house of pray'r,
“The devil always builds a chapel there.”

The Apostle gives us the true character and description of these persons: one part of which is, they “despise government ;” they cry down and despise magistrates ; and “speak evil of dignities ;” of kings and princes : “they are presumptuous and self-willed ;” audacious and daring, stubborn and addicted to their own humours ; nothing will please them but what proceeds from them,
and

and makes for themselves. Their despising of government, and speaking evil of dignities, is aggravated by the contrary example of angels. "Whereas angels," good angels, "which are greater in power and might," than magistrates of the highest order, though God employ them to protect his church, and sometimes to withstand and punish the tyranny and rage of wicked rulers, as they did Pharaoh and Sennacherib; "bring no railing accusation against them," against rulers and governors, "before the Lord," or against the evil angels. See Jude 9. But the temper of these false seducing teachers, is far different from this: for they are so far from resembling the angels in their behaviour, that "they are like natural brute beasts," which, following the brutish impetuosity and force of their appetites, pursue after their prey till they run themselves into nets or snares, and so are taken and destroyed; find their death, where they expected their food. "They speak evil of the things they understand not." And that they may be successful in gaining disciples, "they speak great swelling words of vanity;" use a lofty, airy style, propound their doctrines in bubbles of words, full of wind, to amuse, allure, deceive, and gain weak people over to themselves. "They are wells without water;" pretending to be deep fountains of true and saving knowledge, but are like the brooks of Tema, which disappointed men's expectations: they are "clouds that are carried with a tempest;" they promised to refresh men with the showers of wholesome doctrine, in order to their being fruitful; but they yield no such thing, any more than a cloud that is driven with a tempest. "They have forsaken the right way," the way of truth and holiness taught by the gospel; "and are gone astray," into the paths of error and sin. "Spots they are and blemishes;" the blotches of christian society, the scandal and reproach of the christian church: "sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;" they join with you in your feasts of love or charity, under pretence of evidencing that way their christian love to you, but are in the mean while inwardly pleasing themselves with their cunning artifices and fair pretences, whereby they cheat and deceive you. And "while they promise them," their disciples and followers, "liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption;"

the

the vilest of slaves to their own passions, and their base and abominable lusts.

He also foretels the success of these false teachers. "Many shall follow their pernicious ways;" they shall have many disciples, who, being seduced by them, shall embrace their pernicious doctrines. "By reason of whom," of these false teachers and their licentious disciples, "the way of truth," the true gospel doctrine and its professors, "shall be evil spoken of," shall be blasphemed. The preachers of the true gospel doctrine, and its professors, are evil spoken of, by false teachers and their disciples: we have but too much proof of this in the present age.

And he foretels also the destruction of these false teachers. They "bring upon themselves swift," speedy "destruction;" sometimes in this world, certainly in the next: they pervert the truths of the gospel to their own cost. "Their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not;" their judgment and damnation hasten toward them, and will be inflicted upon them, to their surprise and ruin. "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever;" by the just judgment of God, the eternal darkness of hell is reserved for them. The misery of wicked men in the future state, is frequently in scripture set forth by darkness, utter darkness, blackness of darkness, eternal darkness; a fit punishment of those, whose business in this world is to practise the works of darkness, and to fill men's minds with the darkness of error, and their lives with the darkness of sin and wickedness.

3. Another branch of our duty to the King, is, obedience to all his lawful commands; by which I mean those that are given with competent authority, as well as lawful for the matter of them: this is what subjects are bound to by the law of God—"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Indeed if his commands be such as manifestly clash with the known laws of God, in such a case, we must act according to the determination of the Apostle—"We ought to obey God, rather than men:" this is a maxim universally owned, and which even conscience, under the direction of reason, subscribes to. The greatest powers on earth neither have, nor can have, any authority to contradict, or violate the declared will of

of God, to forbid what he has commanded, or command what he has forbidden.

Laws may be made by men, which invade the prerogative of God, and meddle with things reserved and peculiar to him; in which case, they must want competent authority. If any earthly king should presume to make articles of faith, or appoint rites of worship, and bind them by laws upon his subjects; this would be to act without warrant and commission; and what is unwarrantably commanded, can never bring conscience under an obligation to obey. Nay, further, should the king give commands, that either contradict the laws of the constitution, or tend to the destruction of these laws, we are not bound to obey them.

But where laws are made with competent authority, and commands are given agreeable to these laws, obedience to the prince is due, "not only for wrath, but for conscience sake:" and in case we transgress those laws, we must patiently submit to the punishment due to our crimes; to resist in such a case would be to resist God's ordinance, that ordinance, by which kings and rulers are appointed ministers of God, for the protection and encouragement of them that live peaceably, and do good; and revengers, to execute wrath on them that live disorderly, and do evil. This is certainly the scope and force of the Apostle's reasoning, in that celebrated passage, "Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation," or rather punishment, or judgment.

4. The duty we owe the King, includes, our giving him all the assistance in his administration and government, that our stations and abilities will allow. It is the King's business to seek the public welfare, which certainly deserves, and, we may easily believe, will constantly require the public assistance. It is the duty of subjects readily and cheerfully to contribute to the expences of the kingdom, that the royal dignity may be supported, the necessities of the community answered, the public peace be secured, and the public interest promoted. Customs and taxes, settled by lawful authority, are to be looked upon as the King's property for public uses; uses for the good of his subjects.

D

And,

And, as professors of Christianity, we have the precept and example of our Saviour, to direct and influence us to pay tribute. "There is no appearance in the gospel, that our Saviour intended to make any alterations in the civil governments of the world. He came upon another errand, of quite a different nature: he never purposely enters upon the subject of government, that being no necessary part of his doctrine; but treats of it only as he was led by particular occasions.

In the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew, we find a captious question put to him by the Pharisees, Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to the Roman emperor, or not? The question arose from hence: There was at that time a sect among the Jews, who held it to be unlawful to pay any tribute to the Roman emperor, or to yield any obedience to his laws. The author of this opinion was Judas of Galilee; who, when the Roman emperor ordered the nation to be taxed, raised upon that account a great rebellion; persuading the people to stand by their liberties, and not to submit to such a mark of slavery, as paying of tribute. The fate of this man is related fully by Josephus; and is mentioned likewise by Gamaliel in Acts v. 37. "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." But though they were for the present dispersed, yet by degrees they gathered strength, and were the authors of many troubles; and in the reign of Claudius were strong enough to ravage and destroy many places in Samaria. Their pretence for freedom was, as we learn from St. Chrysostom, that they were the Servants of the Lord, and therefore owed no subjection to any human creature; that they were the freemen of God, and ought not, therefore, to be slaves, or the subjects of men. This sect went by the name of Galileans; the author of it being of that country, as likewise many of his followers.

Now, it is well known, that this was a name by which the Christians went in the first ages. They are mentioned under this name by several Heathen writers. And that it was in use among all who spoke contemptuously of Christ and his religion; even so late as in Julian's time, we learn from his writings still remaining, where he often
speaks

speaks of the Christians under the name of Galileans. And hence it came to pass, that the Christians going by the name of Galileans were generally thought by the Heathens to entertain the same opinions with the sect of that name; that is, they were taken to be men of seditious principles, who refused obedience to earthly princes, and were for setting up an independent government of their own. Thus, when Tertullus, the orator, accuses St. Paul, he charges him with being "a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." Acts xxiv. 5. Of this calumny we find the unbelieving Jews also making their advantage against the Christians; for thus they accuse them to the magistrates of Thessalonica, "These who have turned the world upside down, are come hither also." Acts xvii. 6.

Upon this ground then it was that the Pharisees put this insidious question to our Saviour, "Is it lawful to pay tribute to Cesar*?" hoping, no doubt, to have found

D 2

something

* The state of the question, truly taken, seems to be this,—The government of the Jews had fallen into the hands of the Maccabees, and, in succession, to one of them named *Alexander*. He had two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the younger of which made war upon the elder, and assumed to himself the government. Hyrcanus and his party being not able to resist him, called in the assistance of the Romans. Pompey, at their request, besieges Jerusalem, and had the gates surrendered to him by a faction within, that favoured Hyrcanus; but Aristobulus and his adherents fought it out, till at last they were vanquished and overpowered. The Romans put Hyrcanus in possession of the government; but, at the same time, obliged him to hold it by their favour and permission, which laid the foundation of great and lasting dissensions among the Jews, some submitting to the Roman power, as thinking they had a fair title both by conquest and surrender; while others objected, that the surrender was made by a party only, and not the whole body of the people; that it was not conquest, but treachery, which brought Jerusalem to their mercy; and, consequently, that they were usurpers, and Hyrcanus and his followers betrayers of their country. That which contributed not a little to make this controversy still greater, was what Josephus and Eusebius relate concerning Judas the Gaulonite. He, about the time of the taxation, in which (as St. Luke says) our Saviour was born, disquieted the minds of many, and represented the decree of Augustus for that purpose as a mark of infamy and servitude not to be borne. This man is said to have instituted a particular sect, one of whose tenets was,—That no Jew ought to pay tribute, or to acknowledge any sovereign Lord, but God only; and that they were his peculiar

something whereof to have impeached him before the Roman governor." Our Saviour said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Why do ye thus tease and try me, to the end ye may entangle and ensnare me? "Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny†. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cesar's." Which was, in effect, an answer to their own question which they put to Christ; for their admitting the use of the Roman coin, as good and current money in their nation, was an implicit owning the power and dominion of the Romans over them. And indeed, this is a standing rule—The current coin of every nation shews who is the supreme governor of it. "Then saith he unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's ‡:." *i. e.* pay him tribute, and

peculiar people, and therefore bound to maintain their liberty, especially against profane and uncircumcised pretenders, such as the Roman emperors were. So that the paying of tribute to Cesar was not, at this time, a question of mere curiosity, but a matter of moment with regard to practice; nor was it a point of bravery only, in the esteem of the Pharisees, and others of that party, but a scruple of conscience, and a debate of religion, whether this tribute should be paid or not. *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

† The penny they shewed him was a Denarius, a Roman penny, which was in value seven pence half-penny of our money. Cesar's image was imprinted upon this coin, probably on one side, and an inscription on the other, which some tell us was, *Anno post captam Judeam*; such a year after the conquest of Judea. And the Jews were obliged to pay their tribute in this, and no other coin, that thereby it might appear they were under the dominion of the Romans.

‡ Some interpreters are of opinion, that our Saviour's words do not determine Cesar's right to demand tribute: But since the Jews had now submitted to the Roman government, (as they had formerly done to the Assyrian,) which national submission (with promise of fidelity) having now obtained about an hundred years, was a just ground for Cesar's rights; since besides this, Cesar had indulged them in the exercise of their religion, and the enjoyment of their civil rights; had fought their battles, and protected them against the common enemy, the Arabians, and Parthians, and the like; since, more especially, it was a received maxim among the Jews, that where-ever the money of any person was owned as the current coin of the kingdom, there the inhabitants acknowledged that person to be their lord and governor; and since the Jews accepted, and trafficked with Cesar's money, and held it current in all their payments, our Saviour's answer, *Render therefore unto Cesar*, which is founded upon their own principles, must needs be deemed a positive declaration of Cesar's right to receive tribute, and such other acknowledgments

and be subject to him in civil things; for if he protects you in your civil rights, and defends them by the administration of justice, you ought to be subject to him.

At Capernaum they that received the tribute-money, (gr. *Didrachma*, in value fifteen pence) came to Peter and said, "Doth not your master pay tribute?" Peter, without consulting with his Master about this matter, and without hesitation, well knowing our Saviour's readiness to render to all their dues, replied, "Yes." And our Saviour, though he intimates that he ought to have been exempted from paying tribute, as being the only begotten Son of God, yet, to prevent scandal and offence, he waves his right, would not insist upon his privilege, he says to Peter, "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them:" *i. e.* lest we should give offence to, and encourage, either the Jews to refuse to pay tribute, or the Romans to think we are men of antimonarchical principles, and that Christianity is an enemy to loyalty, I will abridge myself of my lawful liberty in this matter, "go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money, (a *Stater*, in value two shillings and sixpence; just the sum that was wanted, for Peter and our Saviour) that take, and give unto them for me and thee ||."

This is also what the apostle Paul requires on the behalf of kings and governors. When he writes to the Christians at Rome, which was the ordinary residence of the Emperor, and where any the least disorder would be the soonest taken notice of, and most improved to the

D 3

prejudice

knowledgments as belonged to the state and dignity of the post wherein Providence had placed them. It might indeed be objected, (says Grotius, on Matth. xxii. 20.) that the Romans ruled over the Jews, and Cesar over the Romans, in fact only, and without any right to do so; but Christ shews, that this objection signifies nothing to the matter in hand: for since peace cannot be secured without forces, nor forces had without pay, nor pay without taxes or tribute, it follows, that tribute ought to be paid to the person actually governing, (so long as he continues to govern,) in consideration of the common safety and protection, which are secured by the present possessor of the government, whoever that possessor be. *Whitby's Annotations; and Sta-hope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

|| What knowledge, power, poverty, and goodness, did our Lord here discover!

prejudice of the gospel, he says, "For this cause pay you tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing:" *i.e.* the public good. They are God's ministers, and according to his appointment are obliged to attend continually upon the affairs of government, and to employ themselves in the care of the public welfare, in the administration of justice, and in the maintaining of order and peace. But they cannot support their authority, nor attain to the ends of government without tribute or taxes; without these they cannot support their power to the advantage of the public; cannot answer the necessities of the community. Therefore taxes are the sovereign's property for public uses. "Render therefore to all their dues:" to all magistrates, supreme or subordinate, their dues. "Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom," is due. By tribute may be meant taxes on persons and estates; by custom, rates and impositions on goods and merchandise, exported or imported. These are due to magistrates; just debts, as the word signifies.

And the primitive Christians have left us a noble example of obedience to our Saviour's precept and example, in being dutiful to those who had the rule over them. As for tributes and customs, none ever paid them more freely than they. "For your taxes and tributes," says Justin Martyr, (who was born A. D. 103; converted to Christianity about 133; and put to death in or before 167;) to the emperors, "we are above all men every where ready to bring them in to your collectors and officers, being taught so to do by our great Master, who bad those that asked the question, Whether they might pay tribute to Cesar? to give to Cesar the things that are Cesar's."

"Now, though our Saviour's business was not either to limit or to enlarge the civil governments of the world, yet this scandal, which he and his disciples lay under, urged both him and them to vindicate themselves, and to teach their followers such obedience and submission to the higher powers, as might leave no pretence for such an accusation." Jesus Christ and his religion are not enemies to civil government: that charge, therefore, that the Jews brought against him at his trial, that he forbade the Jews to pay tribute to Cesar, was as false as it was malicious.

malicious. The whole tenor of his life shewed, that his design was to do men good as to soul and body; and particularly since he laboured to persuade men to be peaceable and faithful in their several relations to each other. Christianity is so far from being an enemy to civil government, that it is very much the strength and support of it. It teaches subjects their duty as such, and magistrates theirs too. And those magistrates, who befriend the Christian religion, pursue the best measures for their own security; whereas those, that encourage vice and profaneness, dig up their own foundations, and undermine their own power and authority.

5 Our duty to the King includes, zeal for his service and interest, for the defence of his person and government. Whilst our King endeavours to pursue the true ends of government, and to be the minister of God for good to us, we should give him all the service in our power; should endeavour to procure him love and respect from our fellow subjects; should detect conspiracies formed against him as soon as we come to the knowledge of them, and so defeat the designs of wicked men, who would disturb the peace of his reign.

In kingdoms and nations there are frequently persons addicted to make changes in the civil government, who secretly wish, or openly endeavour, to disturb the settled state and order of political affairs. Such are those that are of a restless discontented temper, who are ever hurried by their pride and ambition, and who, from the perpetual uneasiness of their own minds, and discontented with their condition, are ever plotting to disturb civil governors in their administration, and to throw civil society into confusion.

Also those, of a pragmatical meddling temper, whom no model of government; no management of power will ever please; because, out of a conceit of their own superior genius, they think they could very much mend and improve such things. They are so full of their own fondling schemes, as to censure and condemn those in the administration, and continually clamour against them; and to engage, by these means, as many as they can to chime in with them. Men of this temper, especially if they be persons of high rank and extensive interest, and

of

of recommending popular address, do unspeakable mischief in society.

And likewise those of a perverse ungovernable spirit, that, like the troubled sea, are always casting up mire and dirt, and never at rest; men that sleep not except they do mischief, who will act without restraint or controul, regardless of consequences; and rather than be crossed in their wicked practices and projects, will fly in the face of lawful authority, and overturn all order. We may venture to say, that such persons are traitors to the common interests of mankind, and enemies to their own country.

Respecting the above characters, we should have nothing to do with them, to countenance their principles or encourage their projects; give no patient ear to their schemes and suggestions; not be seduced by their plausible talk; not enter into their measures; engage in none of their designs; say nothing, do nothing that might humour their pride and vanity, their avarice and ambition, their wicked and factious temper, to make confusion in the kingdom, or to break out into open rebellion against the King and government: but we should reprobate their sentiments, and discountenance their proceedings, by every laudable measure. This is what Solomon recommends to us,—“My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change.”

There is scarce any particular instance wherein primitive Christianity did more triumph in the world, than in the exemplary obedience of its genuine professors, to the civil magistrates under whom they lived. You defame us, says Tertullian, (who was baptised A. D. 196, and died in 246) with treason against the emperor, and yet never could any Albinians, Nigrians, or Cassians, (persons that had mutinied and rebelled against the emperors) be found amongst the Christians; they are those that swear by the emperor's Genii, that have offered sacrifice for their safety, that have often condemned Christians; these are the men that are found traitors to the emperors. A Christian is no man's enemy, much less his prince's; knowing him to be constituted by God, he cannot but love, revere, and honour him, and desire that he and the whole Roman empire may be safe, as long as
the

the world lasts. Thus Arnobius, (in the fourth century) confidently challenges the Heathens, Whether they could reject Christianity upon the account of its raising wars, tumults, and seditions in the world? Julian the emperor, though no good friend to Christians, yet, thus far does them justice, That if they see any one mutining against his prince, they presently punish him with great severities.

The primitive Christians were not thus obedient and submissive to the higher powers, and patient under the punishments they inflicted upon them, for want of power, and because they knew not how to help themselves; but for conscience sake, or out of obedience to the will of God, whose minister the magistrate is. Tertullian says, That if they thought it lawful to return evil for evil, they could in one night, with a few fire-brands, plentifully revenge themselves; that they were no small and considerable party, and that they needed not to betake themselves to the little arts of skulking revenges, being able to appear in the capacity of open enemies; that though of but yesterday's standing, yet they had filled all places, all offices of the empire: and what wars were they not able to manage, who could so willingly give up themselves to be slain, did not the law of Christianity oblige them to be killed rather than to kill? Nay, that they need not take up arms and rebel; for their party was so numerous, that should they but agree together to leave the Roman empire, and to go into some remote corner of the world, the loss of so many members would utterly ruin it; and they would stand amazed and affrighted at that solitude and desolation that would ensue upon it, and have more enemies than loyal subjects left amongst them: whereas now they had the fewer enemies, for having so many Christians.

6. And lastly, our duty to the King includes, our recommending him by daily and earnest prayer to the favour, protection, and blessing of the Almighty Being. This is what the apostle Paul enjoins, "I exhort that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for kings and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." Here he exhorts Timothy, that he should do this himself, and,

also,

also, take care it was done by the ordinary ministers of the church. The rulers and magistrates in these times were Heathens, and professed enemies to the gospel, and therefore some Christians might make it a question, whether they were to be prayed for, and not rather to be prayed against. To remove that scruple, the Apostle orders, that they in a special manner be prayed for. The duty of prayer exhorted to, he expresses in several words, which words denote the several parts of prayer: "supplications," for the averting of evils; "prayers," or petitions, for blessings temporal and spiritual; "intercessions," for others; "and giving of thanks," for mercies received. This duty is to be performed in behalf of all men, in general; and for kings and all that are in authority under them, in particular. The Apostle here exhorts, that prayers be made especially for kings and governors; "for kings and all that are in authority." These have the greatest influence on the peace and happiness of mankind, and therefore are in a special manner to be prayed for: without civil government all things would run into confusion. He gives several reasons for it;—"that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;" *i. e.* that our civil rights and interests may be protected and secured; that we may enjoy external peace and tranquillity, and in that, the free exercise of our religion, of which godliness and honesty are a summary; the former of these words comprehending our duty to God, the latter our duty to our neighbours. As such a life is the end of government, so it is the way to have the protection of the government: "do that which is good," says the same Apostle, "and thou shalt have praise of the powers that are ordained of God." Another reason, by which the Apostle urgeth praying for kings, and all that are in authority, is, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour:" 'tis according to his will, and therefore good; and being rightly performed, is acceptable in his sight; and, what is so, we should be careful to do, and abound in. And another reason or argument is taken from God's love to mankind in general, "Who will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth:" *i. e.* both kings and their subjects, governors and the governed.

Nor

Nor was this peculiar to the times of the Apostles, we find the same duty attended to in the succeeding ages of Christianity. Tertullian says, that a solemn part of Christian worship, was, to pray for the happiness and prosperity of the princes under whom they lived. "We pray (says he) for the emperors, for the grandees and ministers of state, for the prosperity of the age, for the quietness of affairs, for the continuance of their lives and government; that God would give them a long life, a secure reign, an undisturbed house, powerful armies, faithful senators, honest subjects, a quiet people, and indeed whatever they can wish for, either as men or emperors." Athenagoras (who lived in the second century, and wrote an apology for Christianity about the year 170) says, as he concludes his address to the emperors, Are there any more devoted to you than we? who pray for the happiness of your government, that, according to right and equity, the son may succeed his father in the empire, that your dominions may be enlarged, and that all things may prosper that you take in hand. And Cyprian, (who sealed the truth with his blood in the year 251) tells the proconsul, That as badly as they were used, yet they ceased not to pray for the overthrow and expulsion of the common enemies, for seasonable showers, and either for the removing or mitigating public evils; begging of God day and night, with the greatest instance and importunity, for the peace and safety of their persecutors; endeavouring to pacify and propitiate God, who was angry with the iniquities of the age. Thus the Apostles preached and wrote, and thus the first Christians believed and acted; they all prayed for Heathen kings that were opposers of Christianity. And shall we be silent, and not pray for a Christian King? in opposition to the voice of the scriptures, and the conduct of Christians in the first and purest ages of Christianity? God forbid! Yea, rather, let us pray, sincerely, fervently, and perseveringly, to God for our King; in obedience to the laws of Christianity, and for the welfare of our Sovereign and his kingdoms.

And let us consider, our King does very much stand in need of our prayers. The affairs which he is called to manage are very great, and sometimes very difficult. He has the true religion to defend and practise, in the midst
of

of a crowd of temptations to neglect the practical part of it, at least; he has the rights of his subjects to secure and preserve, their birth-rights, their acquired-rights, and their religious-rights; and our comfortable enjoyment of them does very much depend on the wise and good government of our King. Sometimes he is concerned in public treaties, articles of alliance, and negotiations of such a nature, as may not only affect a part, but the whole of his subjects; yea, not only his own dominions, but other states and kingdoms also; and that not only for the present, but for succeeding generations too. And, sometimes, he has very powerful armies, both domestic to suppress, and foreign to oppose; and that, not only for himself, but, for us. Crowns sometimes sit heavy, and are always lined with thorny cares. And, therefore, our prayers for our King should be frequent and fervent, that he may rule with wisdom and equity, and be a blessing to all under his government. Prayer for our King is a mark of our loyalty and respect to him, and, as to the generality of his subjects, is the only solemn way, in which they are capable of testifying their loyalty.

It should be considered by us, that this is what our Kings, one after another, require from us, by giving express orders for our praying for them. Even the Persian king desired the prayers of the Jews for his life and prosperity. See Ezra vi. 8, 9, 10. And this test of loyalty is in the power of those that are at the greatest distance from the throne: and the prayers of the most distant, or, even the meanest subjects that have interest with God, (for he does not despise the prayers of such) may have, joined with the counsels of those about the throne, very great influence for promoting the welfare and prosperity of our King and government.

And the consideration of this duty being "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour," will, I am sure, be a prevailing argument with all those, who sincerely desire and endeavour to approve themselves to God. And if we consult our own welfare, this is also the most effectual way to attain what is necessary to our happiness and prosperity. Do we wish to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty? then we must, scripturally and conscientiously, perform this duty. On this view of things, God commanded the Jews to pray
for

for the welfare of the Heathen state under which they lived in captivity, "Seek the peace of the city, whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Much more reason have we to pray for the welfare of this nation, where we are a free people, that in the peace thereof, we may have peace. So that if we consult our own interest, that will induce us to pray for our King.

And the inhabitants of Great Britain have repeatedly found by experience, that it is not a vain thing to offer up such prayers to God. Many instances might be mentioned of the power and efficacy of prayer, to encourage us to pray and persevere in this duty: I shall mention one. In the reign of King George I. when there broke out an unnatural rebellion, the rebels were conquered in both parts of the Island, namely, at Preston and Dumblain, in the year 1715, at such a time as proclaimed the victory to be given in answer to prayer, I mean the Lord's-day, when his people, in their several congregations, were jointly offering prayers to God for the success of the King's arms; so that I may allude to that scripture, 1 Sam. vii. 10. "While Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines were smitten before Israel."

Let us therefore pray for our King, that the happy influence of his government may be as wide as Europe; that he may be the supporter of his allies and friends, the terror of his enemies, the guardian of religion, the delight of his subjects, the darling of Providence, and emulate the virtues of his ancestors *. And let us take care

E

we

* 1 LORD, thou hast bid thy people pray

For all that bear the sovereign sway,

And thy Vicegerent's reign:

Rulers, and governors, and powers,

And lo! in faith we pray for ours,

Nor can we pray in vain.

2 Jesu, thy chosen servant guard,

And every threatening danger ward

From his anointed head;

Bid all his griefs and troubles cease,

And through the paths of heavenly peace,

To life eternal lead.

3 Cover his enemies with shame,

Defeat their dire malicious aim,

Their

we never be guilty of such an absurdity, as to pray for our King, and neglect to pray for ourselves, and those we have the care of. And, it is of the last importance that we take care, not to do any thing that would contradict or hinder, the success of our prayers.

To conclude, as the primitive Christians were famous for their exemplary obedience to the powers and magistrates under whom they lived; honouring their persons, revering their power, paying their tribute, obeying their laws, where they were not evidently contrary to the laws of Christ; and where they were, submitting to the most cruel penalties they laid upon them with the greatest calmness and serenity of soul; and praying for their happiness and prosperity; let us imitate them, in obedience to the laws of our holy religion, by greatly respecting his Majesty's person, reverencing his authority, obeying his lawful commands, cheerfully contributing to the expences of the kingdom, consulting the interest and safety of his Majesty's person and government, and recommending him daily in our prayers before the throne of grace; that the regal dignity may be supported, the necessities of the community answered, the public peace secured, and the public interest promoted.

Their baffled hopes destroy;
But show'r on him thy blessings down:
Crown him with grace, with glory crown,
And everlasting joy.

4 To hoary hairs be thou his God,
Late may he seek that high abode,
Late to his heaven remove:
Of virtues full, and happy days,
Accounted worthy by thy grace,
To fill a throne above.

5 And when thou dost his spirit receive,
O give him in his offspring, give
Us back our king again:
Preserve them, Providence Divine,
And let the long-illustrious line
To latest ages reign.

6 Secure us of his royal race
A man to stand before thy face,
And exercise thy power;
With wealth, prosperity and peace,
Our nation and our church to bless,
Till time shall be no more.

WESLEY

ESSAY III.

ON REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE SUBJECT AND
OBEDIENT TO THE HIGHER POWERS.

THE providence of God is evidently displayed in ordering a variety and subordination in the conditions of men. If God had made all men as equal in condition, as they are in nature, it would have been a perpetual dispute, who should obey, and who should govern; and it had hardly been possible to bring things upon such a basis to any tolerable order or settlement: whereas that disparity or inequality of conditions among men, which the wisdom of God has appointed, serves to induce such as are poor and mean, willingly to resign the power to them who already enjoy the advantages of a full and prosperous condition. And 'tis no less an inducement to the wealthy and honourable to cherish and protect the poor, without whose labours the most plentiful condition would be far from being happy or easy. Poverty, for example, is the proper state to try men's faith, patience, and resignation; and plenty, to exercise their humility, charity, and moderation. The wisdom of God appears in chusing and appointing different lots and conditions for men, that the rich and the poor, the noble and the ignoble, might be mutually needful and helpful to each other, and that they might be linked together by the strongest ties of interest. And to render society regular, happy, prosperous, secure, and permanent, every member must stand in his own rank, and discharge those duties which providence and the welfare of society require at his hands.

“The public relations of persons are those of magistrates and people. Magistrates are superior or subordinate. And of supreme magistrates, in England, the parliament is the supreme legislative, the King the supreme executive. The King's duties are to govern his people accord-

ing to law, to execute judgment in mercy, and to maintain the established religion. These are his part of the original contract between himself and the people; founded in the nature of society, and expressed in his oath at the coronation. The people are either aliens, that is, born out of the dominions, or allegiance, of the crown of Great Britain; or natives, that is, born within it. Allegiance is the duty of all subjects; being the reciprocal tie of the people to the prince, in return for the protection he affords them; and, in natives, this duty of allegiance is natural and perpetual; in aliens, is local and temporary only. The rights of natives are also natural and perpetual: those of aliens, local and temporary only; unless they be made denizens by the King, or naturalised by parliament."

The design of the present Essay is to urge subjects to discharge, with fidelity and alacrity, those duties to their sovereign, which the laws of God and the constitution of the country require: and as I have in the second Essay, pointed out those duties, I shall therefore in this, assign and enforce several reasons, why we should be subject to the higher powers. And,

1. Government is of Divine institution, it is God's ordinance. It is the will and appointment of Heaven that all nations should have some government; that some one or more should have authority to rule, and that the rest should obey that authority. This will appear in the following texts of scripture. "God is the King of all the earth. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation, from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. There is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God." The power is God's however men come by it, or however they abuse it.

We might here offer several things to prove and illustrate this truth, that "there is no power but of God." Among the Jews, the peculiar people of God, he set Moses over them, appointed him a ruler and law-giver to them, and appointed him to set other governors and rulers

rulers over them, who had authority to keep them obedient to the laws he gave them as God's minister, and without doubt to add other necessary commands of their own. And afterwards, he himself set up governors over them, who are spoken of, in the sacred records, under the name of Judges. And, after this again, the Lord himself elected Saul to be king over his people, and qualified him for his office; and gave express orders to Samuel to anoint him king over Israel. It is true that it is said, the Lord was angry with the Israelites because they asked a king. But this does not prove that kingly government or the authority of magistrates, is unlawful. And, was God angry with them simply for asking a king? Was it not rather for their doing it out of affectation of novelty, and desire to be like the Heathen nations, and out of ambition and carnal confidence in a king as able to protect them, and diffident in God as unable to defend them in his own way? "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheep-folds: from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance." And it is said of Nebuchadnezzar, who gained his dominion by conquest, that God gave him a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. So again of Cyrus, an Heathen prince, and a great conqueror, God speaks and calls him his anointed, and says he had strengthened his hand to subdue nations before him.

Nor will it avail to say, that this institution was peculiar to the times of the Old Testament; for, the prophecies of gospel-times shew that kings and inferior rulers shall be servants to Christ and his church; "Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers." Our Saviour acknowledged the authority of the supreme magistrate, when he said to the Pharisees and Herodians, who were sent by the chief priests and scribes to ensnare him, "Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's." And also when he said to Pilate, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." And after his resurrection from the dead, he said unto his disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." And the apostle Paul, who was

taught by Jesus Christ himself what to preach; for he says, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." I say, this great Apostle declares, "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." And the apostle Peter exhorts to subjection and obedience to magistrates, supreme and subordinate; "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

Again; as a further proof of the divine authority of magistrates, let us consider, that God very often in the scriptures, commands obedience and subjection to them. This may be seen from the texts already quoted: I will just add the following. "Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment. My son, fear thou the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." And from hence it is to be concluded, that their power is of Divine origin; for God's enjoining the duty of the subject, establishes the authority of the magistrate, because they are correlatives. And we find commands in the scriptures for the higher powers, as well as for the people; they have rules of direction set them by God himself. Therefore, if their power were not of God, he would not so far own it as to prescribe rules for the manner of executing it. These things, and others that might be mentioned, prove that magistracy is the ordinance of God.

It hath been objected by some, that the apostle Peter calls it an "ordinance of man;" and concluded from thence that magistracy is a mere human ordinance, and hath originated from men only. But it should be remembered, that the apostle Paul calls it an ordinance of God; and they certainly do not contradict each other. It must therefore be the ordinance of God, and the ordinance

nance of man, in different respects. The ordinance of God it is, as hath been mentioned, in respect of institution and appointment; God is the fountain of all authority. And it is the ordinance of man, in respect of its *subject*; because man is the subject of it, it is seated in him and managed by him: in respect of its *object*; men are the objects about which it is exercised; it is men and the affairs of men about which it is conversant; it is for the encouragement of good men, and the terror and punishment of bad men, and deciding of controversies between man and man: in respect of its *form*; the form of it is not determined by God, but left to the choice and appointment of human prudence: and in respect of its *end*; it was ordained for the benefit of men, and the preservation of human society. In these respects it is called a human ordinance, or human creation or institution, as the original hath it *.

And that infidelity and difference in religion, do not make void the power of the civil magistrate, is very evident. All the magistrates, supreme and subordinate, at the time the apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the Christian church at Rome, were Heathens. The supreme magistrate, or emperor was Nero, not only an Heathen, but a monster of wickedness and brutishness. An orator stiles him, A beast in the shape of a man. He poisoned Britannicus for having a better voice than himself; he murdered Seneca his tutor; he kicked his empress, big with child

* Dr. Doddridge in his Paraphrase says, Let me exhort you to be particularly careful to *be subject to every human constitution* of government, under which you are providentially placed, *for the Lord's sake*, and that ye may not bring any reflection upon the religion of Jesus; *whether it be to the king or emperor, as supreme; or whether it be to governors, and presidents, as sent and commissioned by him from Rome, in order to the punishment of evil doers, but to the praise of them that do well*; for this is indeed the true intent of magistracy, and this will be the care of them who rightly understand the nature and the honour of their office.

Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

Magistracy is certainly of divine right, but the particular form of government, the power of the magistrate, and the persons who are to execute this power, are of human institution, and are governed by the laws and constitutions of each particular country; and this is a general rule, binding in all nations, let the established form of government be what it will.

Henry's Exposition. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

child to death; he killed his mother, and ript her up in sport, to see the place where he lay: he was monstrously obscene. And when a person in his presence said as a proverb, When I am dead let the world be burnt! Nay, replied he, let it be while I am alive. And not long after this, being offended at the narrowness of the streets and irregularity of the buildings, or ambitious of founding a new city, he caused Rome to be set on fire in several places. The conflagration soon became universal, and during nine successive days the fire continued. And while nothing was heard but the lamentations of mothers whose children had perished in the flames, the groans of the dying, and the continual fall of palaces and buildings, he was the only one who enjoyed the general consternation; and, having placed himself upon the top of a high tower, sung on his lyre the destruction of Troy—a dreadful scene which his barbarity had realised before his eyes. And to remove the suspicion of his being the author of this dreadful tragedy, he turned all the odium upon the innocent Christians, who, he knew, were very much hated, and proceeded against them as the incendiaries, and the actors in this calamity; which brought on the first general persecution of the Christian church *. As a governor

* Before the Roman empire was converted to Christianity, there are commonly reckoned ten general persecutions: the first, in the 10th year of Nero. A. D. 64; the second, in the 14th of Domitian, A. D. 95; the third, in the 3d of Trajan, A. D. 100; the fourth, in the 2d of Antoninus Philosophus, A. D. 165; the fifth, in the 4th of Severus, A. D. 197; the sixth, in the 1st of Maximinus, 235; the seventh, in the 1st of Decius, A. D. 249; the eighth, in the 4th of Valerian, A. D. 257; the ninth, in the 4th of Aurelian, A. D. 274; and the tenth, in the 19th of Dioclesian, A. D. 303; till at length Christianity came to be established by human laws, A. D. 313. *Eachard's Ecclesiastical History.*

As to the particulars of this persecution, Tacitus tells us, that, at first, several were seized that made profession of this new religion; and, by their confession, infinite numbers of others were detected, and executed; and, in the manner of their execution, were treated with all the instances of scorn and barbarity. Some of them were wrap up in the skins of wild beasts, and worried and devoured by dogs; others were crucified: and others burnt alive, in paper-coats dipped in pitch, wax, and other combustible matters, that, when day-light failed, they might serve for torches and illuminations in the night. Nero exhibited these spectacles in his own gardens, impiously joining to them the diversions of the Cirque, and appearing himself

governor he was the worst that ever the world saw; so unjust and tyrannical, that the army at last deserted him, and the senate sentenced him to be ignominiously drawn upon a hurdle and whipped to death, and afterwards to be thrown down from the Tarpeian rock like the meanest malefactor. This, however, was not executed; for Nero prevented it by a voluntary death. He killed himself, A. D. 68, in the 32d year of his age, after a reign of 13 years and eight months. Yet, the believing Romans are commanded obedience to this Nero, the stain of majesty, the blush of nations, the disgrace of mankind, and the plague of the world.

2. The necessity of government is another reason of our subjection and obedience to the higher powers; "Ye must needs be subject:" for as without government there can be no society, so without obedience to magistrates there can be no government. Without government neither cities, nor families, nor even nations could subsist; no man could call any thing his own; our liberties, estates, and lives, would quickly be a prey to the covetousness and cruelty of vicious persons; liberty and property altogether banished. Who can express the malice and murders, the rapine and robberies, the mischiefs and miseries, that would reign and rage, were there no government? When there was no king in Israel, then "every man did that which was right in his own eyes:" *i. e.* his lust was his law. Some tell us, that among the Persians, when any of their kings died, the people for five days had liberty to do what they pleased; which was permitted to teach the people the necessity of government.

The want of government in the civil and political world, would it not be like the want of the sun in the firmament, or in the natural world? For nothing is plainer, than that the greatest part of mankind are desperately wicked. Take a view of society, and see how wickedness abounds! What practical Atheism--affected ignorance of God, of his truths and ways--contempt of revealed religion, and of the Holy Scriptures--corruption

himself publicly in the habit of a charioteer, sitting in his chariot, which yet the people entertained more with pity than pleasure, as knowing they were not done for the public benefit, but merely to gratify the tyrant's private rage and malice. *Eachard's Ecclesiastical History, l. i. c. 7.*

tion of the worship of God: how is that corrupted by human inventions, by teaching for doctrines the commandments of men—how is it defecrated by hypocrisy and formality, drawing near to God with the mouth while the heart is far from him—unthankfulness for distinguishing mercies—unfruitfulness under the plentiful enjoyment of the means of grace—gross profanation of the Lord's-day—profane, rash, and customary swearing, in common conversation—perjury, fraud, and falsehood, in buying and selling—luxury and drunkenness—uncleanliness of all sorts—hatred, malice, desire of revenge—treason, rebellion, and murder: in a word, iniquity every where abounds, vice is epidemical, all ranks of persons have corrupted themselves.

Now, were it not that mankind are awed with the terrors of temporal punishments, when they have learned to slight the threatenings of eternal, it were impossible that they should keep within any other bounds than those of their own will; and then, what society, what agreement, what living would there be in the world, if every man was permitted to be his own judge, and upon every slight injury and affront had the liberty of revenging himself! Would there not be almost as little peace and order upon earth as there is in hell! Tyranny is better than anarchy; the one keeps things in some order; but the other puts all into confusion, and sets up as many tyrants as there are slaves to sin: it is better for people to sit under a scratching bramble, than to have no hedge at all to shelter them from the storms of popular fury.

3. And as government prevents a great deal of evil, so it is productive of very much good; for it is attended with great and unspeakable advantages, which is another reason of subjection and obedience to the higher powers. God, of his infinite wisdom and goodness, hath appointed this as a great blessing to mankind; and for this reason it is, that the Apostle says of the magistrate, that "he is the minister of God for the good of men;" for the good of all men in general, and of every individual in particular. Without doubt, government is one of the greatest favours of Providence. It is certainly that on which the happiness of society depends, and by which it is procured and preserved. Hence it is taken notice of, that "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under

under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon." Even Nebuchadnezzar, who was not one of the best of governors, was a cedar "under which the beasts of the field had shadow," protection and refreshment; "in whose boughs the fowls of the air dwelt, and of which all flesh was fed."

A good government is a friend to the innocent and oppressed, to which they may fly for protection and justice, and where they are sure to find it. And on the contrary, the unjust and violent will have little hope of escaping with impunity; and the fear of detection and punishment will be a restraint upon them, how bad soever their inclination may be. Not but under the best government, many particular acts of fraud and injustice may be committed, and may pass undetected and unpunished, but none are designedly screened from deserved justice in the open practice of such crimes: for this would be to pervert the great end of government, and deprive men of one of the main blessings they proposed to themselves, in submitting to it—the security of liberty and property.

Another advantage of a good government is, the suppression of profaneness and immorality. For this end, the magistrate is authorised and entrusted by God. He is the minister of God to be a terror to evil doers, and to execute wrath upon them. Profaneness and immorality are highly displeasing and dishonourable to God; they have a moral tendency to bring down his desolating judgments upon a kingdom, and a natural tendency to debauch the manners, and destroy the peace of civil society, and to bring persons to beggary and ruin, by which means the community must suffer. These things, profaneness and immorality, fall properly under the cognizance of the civil magistrate; for none can pretend conscience for blaspheming the name of the Supreme Being, for pouring contempt on his worship and sabbaths, for living in rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness: no kingdom can be long safe and happy, where no restraint is laid upon such vices as these.

Hezekiah no sooner came to the throne, than, he began the good work of reformation, and to purge out that debauchery and filthiness, which had overspread the land, in the reign of his wicked father, and immediate predecessor, wisely considering, that an unreformed kingdom
would

would sooner or latter be a ruined one. And he took great care also, to destroy the idols, his father Ahaz had set up, to cleanse the temple, and to restore the purity of God's worship there. Whatever might be the case of Pagan princes, for want of better light; in Judah and Israel an idolatrous prince never had, or could have the character of a good and righteous prince; for idolatry among the Jews was high treason against the true God, the King of kings, and ought to have been punished with death. When Hezekiah therefore found the land under the guilt of this sin, it was his first and principal care to remove idolatry. He in his own person publicly owned, professed, and practised the worship of the only true God, and endeavoured by his authority and example to influence and lead the people; and by these means he did in a little time, bring about a general reformation from idolatry.

This is one of the privileges of a good government; the king's example and encouragement have a mighty influence towards the maintaining the visible profession of true religion among the body of his subjects; and this profession may be attended with many temporal blessings, whatever the success is, as to men's eternal salvation, for there is ground to fear, that in such a case, many do not act from a principle of conscience.

Other privileges that attend a good government, are health, wealth, and tranquillity. As for health, the virtues of sobriety and temperance, diligence and industry, have a natural tendency to promote it, and to prevent those diseases, which are the usual effects of sloth and idleness, lewdness, luxury, and intemperance. Again, as for wealth; where liberty and property are secured by a good government, there is great encouragement given to labour and diligence. This causes trade to flourish, and so the blessing of the Lord on the hand of the diligent maketh rich. As for peace and tranquillity; when a prince seeks the good and welfare of all his subjects, and defends and protects them in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges, they will have no cause to become tumultuous and rebellious.

In short, order, justice, strength, wealth, honour, peace, and the enjoyment of the gospel, all these, and many more benefits, are owing to government. Hence it

is

ok
ad
of
of
nd
he
ry
od,
th
ler
are
cly
nly
m-
ns
on

nt ;
nty
on
his
gs,
for
not

are
the
suf-
ficient
and
in,
by
ven
th,
ili-
men
ets,
their
me

ur,
and
e it
is

lawful magistrates; "but" use your Christian liberty "as the servants of God," making conscience of every duty he requires and commands, and of this among the rest, of obedience to magistrates, according to his express will and command: "whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors," *i. e.* inferior magistrates that are deputed and commissioned by the supreme magistrate, to rule and govern cities and provinces under him, and by his authority.

It is evident that men do generally esteem and value things according to the present good or evil which they do in the world; and even religion itself, though it be the most sacred thing among men, is usually valued by the present advantages which flow from it; and how beneficial soever it may be, as to the other life, if it should be found hurtful and mischievous in this, it would be impossible to secure it from the hatred and contempt of mankind. And moreover, the generality of men do judge of religion by the actions of its professors; and if once it appear that they speak evil of dignities, despise government, and are irreverent and disobedient to the higher powers, they who understand no better, will conclude, that it is their religion that teaches them to be so; and consequently the conduct of such professors (who are undutiful to magistrates, supreme and subordinate) will expose religion as a public enemy to the hatred and contempt of mankind. But on the other hand, a careful conscientious discharge of our duty to the higher powers, will give a mighty reputation to Christianity, and shew that to be the best security of government, upon which the temporal welfare of mankind depends.

However imprudent, irreligious, and disloyal some of the professors of Christianity may be, yet let not Christianity suffer on that account, even though some of its ministers should be thus guilty. For Christianity itself is in all respects undeniably most worthy of God, and adapted to the perfection and happiness of mankind, both of particular persons and public societies; as it proclaims war against every vice, and enjoins every virtue; as it commands the subduing of every brutish appetite, and hurtful passion, and cultivates the most amiable and benevolent dispositions; as it is the very picture of its divine Author: and this it declares as its design and complexion with

with the greatest plainness, and in the strongest expressions. Of all the religions then in the world, we might have thought this the least liable to be abused as a pretence for, or justification of revenge, cruelty, and mischief; yet this hath too often been the case, inasmuch, that were we to have judged of it, by the spirit and practice of some, who stile themselves Christians, we must have rejected it for its very pretensions to an heavenly origin. But however much some have abused it, 'tis the most excellent institution that ever was, or will be given to mankind. One great excellence and commendation of the religion of our Saviour is this, that it hath given us a scheme of the purest, the most useful, and the most sublime morality that ever was. This will not be denied by any one, that peruses the original records of Christianity, (I mean the Scriptures of the New Testament) with an unprejudiced mind, and considers in what a native simplicity of language, and yet with what a commanding authority, the most exalted maxims and rules of life are there delivered. Is not our reason as much pleased and satisfied, as our corrupt inclinations are offended, with that religion, in which the noblest heights of divine and human virtues, such as forgiving injuries, doing good for evil; the most raised devotion, the most spiritual worship, the most active gratitude, the most extensive and disinterested benevolence; the greatest purity, the most unaffected humility, and the most generous contempt of all the perishing enjoyments of time and sense are taught: and not only taught, but pressed upon us, by the most prevalent considerations, drawn from the imitation of the most wise and perfect of all beings; from the example of the incarnate Word, from the love of God, and Jesus his beloved Son, from the glorious discoveries that are made to us in the gospel, and the bright, the lively, and most encouraging hopes to which it hath begotten us; that is, by the most powerful and persuasive arguments that can possibly enter into the heart of man to conceive. Such a morality as this, so recommended and enforced, is certainly a very great honour to the Christian religion, and a very considerable proof of its being of a divine origin; and leaves no room for reasonable doubt that it is so, when the other arguments for

its truth from miracles, prophecies *, success †, &c. are added to this. I say then, that Christianity is most worthy of God, and adapted to the perfection and happiness of mankind ;

* Christ appeared with more ample and honourable credentials than ever any true prophet had. For over and above all the miracles and predictions, for which he was so famous, while he lived, he foretold the manner of his own death, and the certainty of his resurrection on the third day ; which being verified in the event, and by a power apparently divine, it must either follow, that God gave his testimony to a lie, which his veracity and goodness will not permit him to do, or else that Jesus was of a truth, what he gave himself out to be, namely, *a Teacher sent from Heaven, and the only Son of God* ; so that our faith of the truth of Christianity has sure ground to fix upon, even the infallible testimony of God, given by the inimitable miracle of raising Christ from the dead. For it must be granted, that wherever a real miracle is wrought in confirmation of any doctrine, which has besides the marks of intrinsic goodness upon it, that doctrine has all the advantage in point of evidence, all the degrees of certainty that any thing revealed from God can well have, or need to have. And it must be granted that the raising up Christ from the dead, was a real miracle far above the power, or activity of any created being ; for to restore life is equivalent to the giving of life, and to give life is the proper act of the Creator ; and therefore the resurrection of Christ must be ascribed to the immediate power of God : and taking this for granted, the resurrection of Christ is a most undeniable proof of the truth of Christianity, and of all Christ's declarations concerning his own person and office, and of the end of his coming into the world ; of the truth of all his doctrines, precepts, and promises.

† The success of Christianity, when first promulged, was very considerable. Men of all religions, Jews and Pagans, of all ranks and denominations, learned and unlearned, men of all sorts were converted to the Christian faith. This is an effect, not only extraordinary improbable, but morally impossible, had Christianity been founded on a lie. The Apostles were a few poor illiterate men, the doctrine which they preached was ungrateful to the Jews, and ridiculous to the Gentile philosophers, and for preaching it they were violently opposed and persecuted. The magistrates and rulers every where did all they could to silence them and quash their evidence, by threatenings, cruel mockings, stripes and imprisonments ; yet the doctrine of Christianity was soon embraced by vast multitudes. Within 25 years after Christ's death, the number of believing Jews at Jerusalem amounted to many thousands ; Acts xxi. 20. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was within less than 40 years after Christ's crucifixion, the gospel was preached in all the nations and countries subject to the Roman empire, which in scripture is sometimes called the *whole world* ; and multitudes every where believed. To what can we attribute this amazing success of the Christian religion, but to the power of God ; but had it been false he would never have owned it.

A late

mankind; it forbids every thing that is against men's temporal and eternal interest, and recommends every thing that is conducive to promote it. Therefore, when any of the professors of Christianity act contrary to its commands, let not such conduct be attributed to the religion they profess, but to the wickedness of their hearts; for were they to live up to the laws of Christianity, they would "render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

5. I add but one thing further, as another ground and reason of subjection and obedience to the higher powers, and that is the danger of disobeying them, which is both unlawful and unsafe, a very dangerous as well as a guilty thing; it highly provokes God's displeasure, and seldom fails to bring a speedy vengeance on those that are guilty of it. Magistracy, as has been already mentioned, is God's ordinance: magistrates designed by his providence their work concerns his glory, and therefore God concerns himself in their quarrels, and every affront that is done to them he takes as offered to himself; "they have not rejected thee," said the Lord to Samuel, "but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them." It is said, Psalm lxxxii. 1. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods." Not only to observe whether they offer injuries to others, but also to take care that they receive no injuries from others.

Calamity and ruin will be the portion of contemners of lawful authority. See the divine threatning, Prov. xxiv.

F 3

22.

A late eminent Author observes, "*Not many Noble, not many Wise are called*, says the Apostle; Nevertheless some of both, even at the rise of Christianity, openly stood up for its truth. Among the *noble* we find Joseph a member of the great Jewish council, Dyonisius one of the Judges at Athens, and Flavius Clemens a Roman Senator; and among the *wise*, Quadratus, Aristides, and Athenagoras, Athenian Philosophers; Clemens, Arnobius, Ammonius, Annatolius, &c. men of great learning at Alexandria; and at Rome, Justin Martyr and Tertullian, both famous apologists for the religion of Jesus, the latter of whom in the second century told the Roman Governors, that their corporations, councils and armies, and the Emperor's palace were full of Christians: Nor is this improbable, since so early as St. Paul's days the *saints of Cesar's household* saluted those of the Roman Provinces. Phil. iv. 22. How credulous are they who can believe that persons of such rank and learning could be deluded by Jewish fishermen into the worship of a crucified impostor!"

Fletcher's Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense. p. 155.

22. "their calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin of them both;" *i. e.* of both those that are given to change, and of those that fall in with their design, and who do any way abet and serve them. And again, Eccl. x. 8. "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and whoso breaketh an hedge a serpent shall bite him:" he that breaks the hedge wherewith God by his ordinance hath enclosed the prerogatives and powers of magistrates, does but twist an halter for himself, or prepare a block for his own head. "Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be affraid of the power? do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be affraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain*: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doth evil."

In all ages God hath risen up against those who rose up against his representatives and vicegerents. It has been observed by some, that most, if not all, of those whom the Scriptures mention as opposers of magistracy, were punished with a violent death. Koráh, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that pertained to them, were swallowed up alive of the earth. Num. xvi. 31, 32, 33. Absalom's rebellion ended in his own destruction: the pride of his hair became the instrument of his ruin; caught by it, he hung between heaven and earth, till Joab struck him through with three darts, and threw him into a pit. 2 Sam. xviii. 9,—17. Perfidious Ahithophel, hanged himself. 2 Sam. xvii. 23. Shimei's railing and curses fly back in his own face, like dust thrown against the wind. 1 Kings ii. 44—46. Sheba's insurrection ended in the loss of his head, which a woman threw over the wall of Abel, to the general of the king's forces. 2 Sam. xx. 21, 22. The ends of Adonijah, 1 Kings ii. 25. Joab, 1 Kings ii 34. and Athaliah, 2 Kings xi. 16. were all miserable; and Zimri had no peace that slew his master. 1 Kings xvi. 18.

* *Holdeth not the sword in vain.* This strongly intimates the lawfulness of inflicting *capital punishment*, which to deny is subverting the chief use of *magistracy*.

Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor, Critical Note, Rom. xiii. 4.

xvi. 18. He came to the throne by blood and treachery, and within seven days was constrained to burn the palace over his head, and himself in it. It is generally thought that the Galileans, whom Pilate slew in the temple, when they were come up to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, at some of the three solemn feasts, and whose blood he mingled with that of their sacrifices, were some of the followers of that Judas of whom Gamaliel speaks, Acts v. 57. This Judas had maintained (as I have already mentioned) that it was not lawful for the Jews, being Abraham's seed, to pay tribute to Cesar, and thereby acknowledge their subjection to a foreign power, and made an insurrection against the Roman government. Profane, as well as Sacred history, are full of instances of men pursued with speedy vengeance for their opposition to magistrates; particularly our English Chronicle, where we read of a great many, who drew upon themselves the vengeance both of God and the government.

These now are some of the many grounds and reasons of our subjection and obedience to the higher powers. And as persons professing Christianity, we may therefore see that the Christian religion is no enemy to magistracy. Christ's kingdom doth not destroy but confirm the magistrate's; they are not contrary the one to the other, but may well subsist together. The gospel doth not abolish, but establish civil government. Christianity frequently and expressly enjoins subjection and obedience to magistrates. Indeed the early enemies of Christianity said, that it was an enemy to the civil government; but this was a perfect calumny, an engine of hell to blast its honour and to suppress its credit in the world. The devil and his agents very well knew, that could they but infuse into mankind a belief of this scandal, there would be nothing more conducive to prejudice men's minds against it, and to render it base and infamous in the opinion of the world. Those indeed that bear the Christian name may be enemies to magistrates; this daily experience testifies to the reproach of those thus guilty; but Christians as Christians, *i. e.* acting agreeably to that honourable name, are its best friends.

And as the Christian religion is no enemy to magistracy, those persons who call themselves Christians, and oppose magistrates, are enemies to the religion they profess; for they

they act contrary to its commands. Did the great Author of our holy religion, when upon earth, shew a dutiful regard to the higher powers, by paying tribute, and commanding obedience and respect to them? And did the apostle Paul say to the Christians at Rome in Nero's time, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers?" And the apostle Peter to the dispersed Jews, who were become tributary to the Romans, "Honour the king?" *i. e.* pay him all that regard both in affection and action which the laws of God and man require. I say, did our Saviour and his Apostles do and teach such things; and did the primitive Christians obey such precepts? And as persons professing Christianity, is what they said binding upon us? If so; what shall we think or say concerning those Christians, so called, who despise government, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities; and who are unwilling to pay tribute or taxes due by them to the powers that be; and who influence others to embrace their evil principles and follow their pernicious ways? Why such characters, oppose the government of God, and deny the Lord that bought them, by despising his authority and breaking his commands; they are hurtful to society, scattering fire-brands, arrows, and death, on every side; and while they promise themselves liberty, many of them are the servants of sin and corruption, and shall, without timely reformation and repentance, receive the awful reward of their unrighteous deeds.

Then, that we may be truly loyal, let us be truly religious; for in the scriptures the civil fear of the magistrate is grounded upon the religious fear of God. "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change." We are to "render to God the things that are God's, and to Cesar the things that are Cesar's." 'Tis our first and highest duty to fear the Lord, the great Sovereign of the world. His right to us and our best service is original and independent; His authority is absolute and unlimited over all mankind—they being his creatures. Princes and peasants are in this respect upon a level, He is the Maker of them all; not only the Author of their being, but the disposer of their ranks and conditions. "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and

and lifteth up." Princes and their subjects are equally subject to God, and bound to fear him. It should therefore be our first and chief concern to fear God, and be religious toward him. And 'tis religion that renders us acceptable to God, enriches us with inward happiness, reconciles us to the conduct of Providence, supports us under the ills of life, and opens to our view a pleasing scene of complete and uninterrupted felicity in the world to come *. And if we get true religion, and "render to God the things that are God's," we shall also be truly loyal, and "render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's." Let us then, I say, fear the Lord, that we may duly fear the king; be sincerely religious, that we may be truly loyal: for he that sincerely fears God, will have respect to all his institutions, and magistracy, as we heard, is the ordinance of God, one of his institutions. He will be a dutiful and loyal subject, not only for wrath, not only to avoid human punishment, but for conscience sake, or out of obedience to the will of God. The true loyalist is first and principally loyal to God, whose authority is prior and superior, most ancient and paramount, to that of any earthly king; and then, out of obedience to God, he is loyal to his rightful sovereign, whom he looks upon as one of his ministers and vicegerents.

* "Religion! providence! an after-state!

"Here is firm footing; here is solid rock;

"This can support us; all is sea besides;

"Sinks under us; bestorms, and then devours.

"His hand the good man fastens on the skies,

"And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl."



CONCLUSION.

FROM a retrospect of what has been said, we must conclude that Providence hath very highly favoured the inhabitants of Great Britain. "The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea we have a goodly heritage. And what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?" Surely He requires somewhat of us! "Permit me, therefore, to intreat, to beseech, and even to conjure you, as you love the peace of society, the safety of your families, or the preservation of your own lives; as you desire the prosperity of the church, or the glory of him who purchased her with his own blood; as you wish to escape the just judgment of God, and to enjoy the approbation of the great Master at his coming; as you value those immortal souls, which if they be lost the gain of a whole world will profit you nothing:" that you seriously and practically attend to the following things.

1. Let us be sensible of the excellent blessing of good government, and duly thankful to God for it. The blessing of good government is like that of liberty, or health, or seasonable weather, because 'tis common and familiar to us, we often forget and are insensible of its value, till we come to be unhappily convinced by the loss thereof. That we may be sensible of, the blessing of good government, let us frequently consider and meditate upon, the blessings that do usually flow from it; such as security and safety from the invasion of foreign enemies; protection from oppression and injury, in the possession of our private rights and liberties; the suppression of open profaneness and immorality; liberty of conscience in matters of religion, &c. And when we are duly sensible of the excellent blessing of good government, we shall thank God for it; for he is the Author, not only of our being, but of our happiness too,—“He giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” 'Tis from him that every good gift cometh down; and particularly this of good government; which
is

is therefore in Scripture ascribed to him, as we have already seen. And when we are duly sensible of the blessing of good government, we shall not only thank God for it, but also pray to him for the continuance of it; because he who is the sole Author and disposer of any good, can alone secure the same to us. "The hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters, he turneth them whithersoever he will." The expression denotes the easy and irresistible influence he exercises over their minds, which he can direct to a new train of thoughts and counsels, with as much ease, as the waters of a river are turned into a new channel.

And again; thankfulness for the blessing of good government will display itself in a ready, chearful, conscientious obedience to governors, supreme and subordinate; *i. e.* reverence for the persons, and submission to the authority of those persons, who, under God, are the instruments of our happiness. I am by no means an advocate for slavish notions: but obedience to governors within the law, is founded upon a double basis, as fixed and immutable as the nature of things, viz. both the dignity and usefulness of their office. The dignity is, remotely at least, from God himself, the great Sovereign of the universe, whose is the kingdom, and the power, whose minister the magistrate is, and who hath impressed upon him some image and resemblance of his own sovereignty; hence the title that the Scriptures honour them with, is that of Gods—"I have said ye are Gods." Another basis or foundation of submission and obedience to princes and governors is, the usefulness of their office, which is the public good; the end and design of government, is the happiness of mankind—the greatest and most useful end imaginable. The end of magistracy pleads as effectually for obedience, as the dignity of governors' persons does for its obligation: for to defend the innocent, to punish the guilty, to protect all in their just rights and liberties, to preserve that peace and order, which preserves the world; in a word, to secure to mankind all the comforts and conveniences of civil life, must certainly be the noblest purpose, and highest exercise of human power. So that there is the utmost reason for obedience to our governors; and that not only for wrath, as the Apostle speaks, or from a principle of the fear of wrath or punishment;

ment; but for conscience sake, conscience both toward God, and the magistrate; toward God whose ordinance it is, that some should be in rule, and others be in subjection; and again toward the magistrate, who is God's minister, and whose office is in fact so necessary and beneficial to mankind.

As Britons, we are bound by favours, gratitude, duty, religion, and interest, to be loyal subjects to his Majesty King George, who consults the general welfare of his subjects, secures us in the full and peaceable enjoyment of our rights, civil and religious, and makes good those great and beneficial ends, for which the crown was first settled in his illustrious line. And as to our constitution, it is excellent:—

—————“ So well a tempered state,

“ Where mix'd each government in such just poise;

“ Each power so checking, and supporting each;”

that the nation has risen to greatness by its strength and energy *. It was purchased and handed down to us at the expence of much blood, time has greatly matured it, and long experience shews,

“ That it for ages, still unmov'd may stand—”

—————Unless abounding vice should

Thrust away, the guardian Hand of Heav'n,

“ And lay the toil of ages in the dust.”

2. Let

* Dr. Hardy, of Edinburgh, in his Patriot, judiciously observes, that, “this nation has now, for above an hundred years, enjoyed an uninterrupted course of public felicity, such as the history of mankind has no where else exhibited. It has risen to greatness by the strength and energy of its constitution: a system which philosophy is proud to trace through all its springs of operation; where each part is nicely adjusted to the production of the great object for which it is constructed,—the happiness of the people. Liberty, security, strength of character, humanity, learning, wealth, and peace, are the blessings which it yields to us and ours; and by which approving Providence has ratified the deed of our ancestors in the Revolution settlement. This great system was then finally guarded against the encroachments of power, without being arrested in the progress of improvement. We have enjoyed a race of sovereigns, attached, from principle, to liberty and the laws; and he who now wears the crown of these realms, has a claim, which even faction cannot contest, to that most dignified of all appellations, The Father of his People. His piety to God, his domestic virtues, his strict decorum of manners, oblige us to add to our allegiance the tribute of our esteem; while his reverence for the laws, his proved attachment to the cause of freedom, and his inviolable fidelity to the constitution, render our loyalty to the monarch the pledge of security to our rights.”

2. Let us reform and amend our ways, that iniquity may not prove our ruin, but that God may still protect and defend us in the full enjoyment of our privileges civil and sacred. That sin abounds among us is too evident to be denied. And the great danger of a professing people, who have God nigh unto them, and statutes and judgments most holy, is from sin. If this abounds among them, reformation is their great duty and safety. See the standing maxim of God's government—"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to build, and to plant it: If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10, Nations and kingdoms, having being only in the present state, as nations and kingdoms, can be rewarded and punished only in this present life. But as to individuals or single persons, they spend only a small portion of their existence in this world. Their conduct is not to be exactly determined, till the present scene is entirely closed, and they are gone into another state. However, therefore, the righteous man may seem destitute and forlorn, and the wicked and immoral man, may seem to flourish and triumph here, such appearances are no imputations on the justice of Providence; because there is a future state, in which every man shall give an account of himself to God the righteous Judge, and receive his own reward, and bear his own burden.

—————"Justice is defective here;
"Just as to states, defective as to men."

As to nations and kingdoms, that God rewards or punishes them in this world, according to their virtuous or vicious state, we may appeal to the experience of all ages. History shews us, that many extraordinary mercies have been conferred and judgments inflicted, by an invisible hand; and there is at times so near a resemblance between those mercies and judgments, and the previous conduct of such as are visited by them, that there is no

room to doubt, but one is the cause of the other. When a nation walks uprightly, their place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, bread shall be given them, and their waters sure. While other nations endure many calamities, such as famine, pestilence, earthquakes, inundations, &c. which are plain indications of the just and righteous vengeance of God upon a sinful people. The destruction of the old world by an awful deluge, the terrible destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, by fire and brimstone, are recorded as perpetual monuments of God's hatred of abounding iniquity. Incurrible Pharaoh, and many who had been employed as instruments of his cruelty, suffered a most exemplary punishment, for their oppressions, by the remarkable plagues, wherewith God visited them, and by the final ruin of that tyrannical prince, and his host, in the red sea. This sad catastrophe Moses elegantly describes; "And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." The Canaanites and other nations, when the measure of their iniquities was full, were driven out before the Israelites; it is said, that the land spewed them out for the abominations wherewith they had defiled it. And the Jews, who came in their room, were warned not to commit the like, least it should spew them out also. Lev. xviii. 28.

History furnishes us with many instances of nations subdued, and fallen from an exalted state into a miserable condition, by a dissoluteness of manners. What is now become of the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires? why; sin has ruined them. When they were overrun with vice, and weakened by degeneracy, their glory sensibly diminished, and, at last, they were entirely demolished. See more particularly the last of them. The foundation of the mighty empire of the Romans was laid in frugality, and exact justice, and as long as it was remarkable for these, and other virtues, it was also remarkable for its prosperity, power, and influence;

ence; but when the corruption, luxury, and other vices, of the neighbouring countries found admission, and spread their infection among the Romans, they soon became weak and feeble, till at last, that empire was divided among the conquered nations.

- “ What wrecks of empire has the stream of *Time*
 “ Swept, with their vices, from the mountain-height
 “ Of grandeur deify'd by half mankind,
 “ To dark *Oblivion's* melancholy lake,
 “ Or flagrant *Infamy's* eternal brand?
 “ Those *names*, at which surrounding nations shook,
 “ Those *names* ador'd; a *nuisance!* or, *forgot!*”

But no people upon earth were more remarkable monuments, at different times, both of divine mercies and displeasure, than the Jews. They were delivered in the most surprising manner from that heavy yoke, which the Egyptians laid upon them; and a miraculous power attended them in all their motions. God chose them “to be a peculiar people to himself, above all nations that are upon the face of the earth.” He found them in a desert land. And if we consider the surprising interpositions of Providence in their favour, they might well say with wonder and gratitude, “what nation is there so great, which hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for?” They were happy and prosperous, while they were remarkable examples of allegiance to their King and God. But how surprising was the change of their circumstances, when they changed their manners. They who had been in such an astonishing manner delivered from bondage, became vassals, first to their own lusts, and then in turns to the Heathen nations around them. However their greatest calamities are still behind. Our Lord foretold, that as no people's sins had equalled theirs, all things considered, so their calamities and miseries should be proportioned to them. For speaking of the judgments that awaited them, he assures them, that there should be great tribulation, such as had not been from the beginning of the world, to that time; no, nor ever should be. And whoever will read the Jewish historian's account of the final destruction of their polity, will be convinced, that there was a punctual accomplishment of the prediction. Their great wickedness, and the severe punishment of it, is related

by Josephus: he says, that to relate all their wickedness would be impossible, but in a few words, it might be said, that from the beginning of the world, never was any generation of men more fruitful in wickedness; and declares his opinion, that if the Romans had delayed to execute the vengeance of heaven upon those sinners, either the city would have been swallowed up, by an opening of the earth, or overwhelmed by a flood, or destroyed by fire from heaven, like Sodom, for it brought forth a much more sinful generation of men, than those who suffered those things. And he adds, that those calamities, which, by their wickedness and impiety they brought upon themselves, were so great, that their final destruction by the Romans, did rather put a period to their misery than increase it. They suffered a series of woes and miseries not to be paralleled before, or since; their government as a nation was totally dissolved, Jerusalem razed to the ground, their temple burnt to ashes, and the miserable remainder, who escaped the sword of the conquerors, turned out as so many vagabonds, into a world that has ever since despised and oppressed them; they have been for upwards of seventeen hundred years, and are to this day, a visible instance of Divine displeasure against a wicked, impenitent, incorrigible people.

In the subversion of these mighty monarchies, and the rejection of the Jews, we may clearly discern the destructive nature of sin.

“ Empire, on Virtue’s rock, unshaken stands;

“ Flux, as the billows, when in *vice* dissolv’d.”

And from thence learn this useful lesson, that the same fatal cause will always produce the same fatal effects, and prove equally pernicious to us, as it did to them, unless we forsake it. Virtue is not only the greatest honour, but the surest defence of a kingdom. When luxury finds little or no countenance in the court or camp, the city or country; when religion is regarded as an institution of God, and not as an engine of state policy; when public and private, social and personal virtues, are cultivated with a becoming diligence, and encouraged by the example, as well as edicts of those at the helm; then, the foundation of national glory and happiness is laid: but where these are wanting, a nation

or

or kingdom sinks into a languishing state, and soon expires. If therefore we would approve ourselves the true friends of religion and liberty; if we heartily desire, that our sacred and civil privileges should be continued to us, and transmitted to posterity, we must consider ourselves, as solemnly engaged to promote reformation, according to the different spheres of action, in which we are placed. "Righteousness exalts a nation," says the wise man, "but sin is a reproach to any people," and may prove the ruin of the most powerful empire *.

3. Let us be united among ourselves in these lands. Could this be effected, it would be our beauty and glory, our strength and safety; and effected it might be in all things, which concern our common interest, if Satan and the lusts of men did not hinder it. Could we in Great Britain become the fair example of this to other nations, of what importance would it make us to all Europe! Such is our situation † and trade ‡, that were we but united, we could hardly fail of being safe and happy. The world would then see, that the general disposition of the nation is no invitation to our enemies to invade us, nor encouragement to domestic enemies to kindle a civil war in the bowels

* Violence brought on the deluge. Luxury overthrew Sodom. Cruel usage of the Israelites destroyed Egypt. Complete wickedness caused the extirpation of the Canaanites. Imperiousness, and an abuse of the power of taxation, rent ten tribes from the kingdom of Judah. Pride sunk Babylon. Nineveh and Jerusalem, by timely repentance, once reversed their awful doom; but returning to their former sins, they shared at last the fate of all the states, which have filled up the measure of their iniquities.

Fletcher's Bible and Sword. Page 8.

† ————— "This sacred isle,
" Cut from the *continent*; —————
" This temple, built by Heaven's peculiar care,
" In a recess from the contagious world,
" With *ocean* pour'd around it for its guard,
" And dedicated, long, to *Liberty*,
" That health, that strength, that bloom of *civil* life."

‡ " *Britain!* high-favour'd of indulgent Heaven!
" Nature's anointed empress of the deep!
" The nurse of merchants, who can purchase crowns!
" Supreme in *commerce!* that exuberant source
" Of wealth, the nerve of war; of wealth, the blood,
" The circling current in a nation's veins." —

bowels of the kingdom. Let us be persuaded to lay aside our party quarrels and contentions, our uncharitable heats and animosities, and to cultivate peace, harmony, and good agreement amongst ourselves. How unspeakable are the advantages that would attend this! Even an Heathen could say, that peace or concord, is the soul of the universe, the ornament of life, and the joy of both worlds. They that pursue peace with all men, are in charity with them, and entertain love to them; and wherever this God-like affection is, it liberates the mind from unruly, troublesome, disquieting, and tormenting passions, from wrath, strife, envy, and revenge, which are the works of the flesh, and the punishment of those that indulge them. Peace is the cement of society, its glory and beauty, its strength and safety. "Behold," says the Psalmist, "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity:" how free and happy do they then live; free from slavish fear, from the torments of jealousies, and the alarms of danger; and happy in a delightful conversation, and the mutual offices of love and friendship, which they are ready to do for each other. It is a defence and security against a great many evils, to which we must otherwise be exposed. Where there is strife and contention, discord and animosities, they loosen the bands of society, remove every mean of preservation, and open the avenues of misery, confusion, anarchy, and ruin. "If ye bite and devour one another," says the Apostle, "take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Are we not yet sensible that a house divided against itself cannot long stand? And that faction hath sooner or later been the overthrow of numerous states and communities? Should it not be our wisdom to disappoint the malice of our enemies, by uniting as readily for our own preservation, as they do for our ruin? Let not our conduct

"Prey on the vitals of the public good."

May be we have never yet seriously considered the direful effects of divisions, animosities, and contentions? How often have they invited, introduced, and propagated war in nations and kingdoms! And were the Almighty Governor of the nations to take up a controversy with this nation, and give the wicked to the sword; suffer our enemies to invade us, or a civil war to break out amongst

us; how alarming the consequence! What is war but the destruction of human lives, of creatures made after the image of God; and to cut off, and destroy these by multitudes, is tragical and horrid! If we consider the consequences which do ensue on bloody wars;—how full of horror and frightfulness are they! In the time of war, property is gone, no man knows what to call his own. Laws lose their force, magistrates their authority, civil government is despised, common order, violated and turned into confusion. Families torn in pieces, countries laid waste and desolate, towns and cities sacked, ravaged, and made ruinous heaps. The sacred mysteries of religion are neglected and profaned, and worshipping assemblies are broken up; men have little opportunity left them to mind their immortal souls and another world, when it is most necessary; and reasonable creatures, that should be employed in adoring and worshipping their great Creator, the God of their lives, are employed in designing the mutual destruction of one another's lives; and then that is least considered, which carries the most horror in it, that multitudes are hurried down to perdition, neither dreaded by themselves, nor apprehended by the destroyer;—souls pass in shoals, in thousands into eternity. Now, who, that rightly considers but for a moment, would be instrumental in introducing such a scene of misery and desolation? nay; would not be industrious and indefatigable in attempting to prevent it?

4. And let us trust in God now, in this time of public danger and distress. God, the Almighty Governor of the nations and kingdoms of this world, has many times seasonably and marvellously interposed and saved us; his wisdom, power, goodness, and sovereignty, have been visibly displayed in the whole progress of our salvation. And past instances of the signal and merciful appearance of God in our favour, should be acknowledged in a time of new distress, and are very proper to support our faith in God. We are engaged in a war, which has already cost the nation a great expence of blood and treasure; and we cannot tell how, or when it will end: this only we can say, If God be for us, who, or what, can be against us? For that which renders all warlike expeditions, good or bad, prosperous or calamitous, is the presence or absence of God. When Jehoshaphat had an army of eleven hundred and sixty

sixty thousand, besides his garrisons; he owns God alone able to defend him, 2 Chron. xx. 12.

To put our trust and confidence in the nations counsels, fleets, forces, riches, and such like external means of defence, more than in God, is the way to forfeit his protection, and to hinder their instrumental usefulness. Solomon observes, that "the battle is not" always "to the strong." And David, his father, says, that "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host." We cannot conclude the certainty of events, merely from the power and probability of second causes. The chances of war are a common proverb. Armies, that seemed sure of victory, have been taken at a surprise, and defeated; those, who have conquered in one battle, have been triumphed over in another; fatal sicknesses have swept away the bravest soldiers; a formidable navy may be conquered by waves, and shipwrecked in a storm; allies may change sides; the commanding officers in a navy or army may be corrupted, and become careless of a nation's defence; the officers in an army, that seems almost invincible by any human power, may, by their divisions, ruin it; and, in the midst of danger, and in time of the greatest need, the wisest heads may fall by death, and in that very day their thoughts perish!

The folly and vanity of an undue confidence in such things, will appear, if we consider, that it is the direct way to hinder their instrumental usefulness. They may be very serviceable, and answer their promising appearance, if they be relied upon under God; but when we rely upon them without an eye to God, we provoke him to blast them; and without his blessing, our governors, our fleets, our armies, &c. will be of no use to us.

"O BRITAIN! often rescu'd, often crown'd,
 "Beyond thy merit, or most sanguine hopes,
 "With all that's great in *war*, or sweet in *peace*!
 "Know from what source thy signal blessings flow.
 "Though blest'd with spirits ardent in the field,
 "Though cover'd various *oceans* with thy fleets,
 "Though fenc'd with rocks, and moated by the main,
 "Thy trust repose in a far stronger guard;
 "In HIM, who thee, though *naked*, could defend;
 "Though *weak*, could *strengthen*; ruin'd, could *restore*."